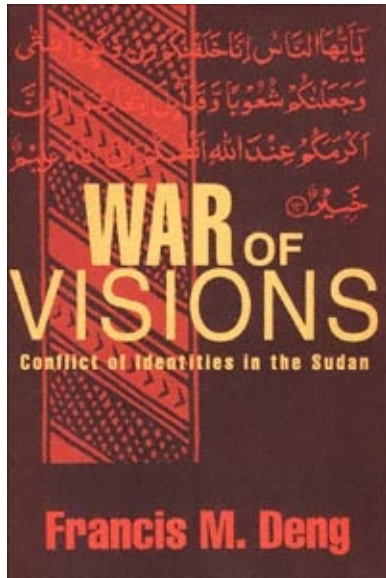


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WAR OF VISIONS

Conflict of Identities in the Sudan

Francis M. Deng

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Foreword

Countries with a severe crisis of national identity confront serious dilemmas. On the one hand, identities, however determined, offer individuals and groups a basis for a deep sense of belonging, dignity, and security, especially when states fail to ensure protection and assistance. Identities can also provide building blocks for nationhood developed on the distinctive attributes of a group. On the other hand, nation building requires unity and a common sense of purpose, which should transcend factional or sectarian perspectives and interests. These challenging realities often come into conflict, ultimately endangering not only the collective interest of the country, but the factional interests of the parties as well.

Francis M. Deng sees identity as a function of how individuals and groups identify themselves and are identified by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, or region. While identity is determined by these objective factors, social scientists emphasize that what people think they are counts more than what they objectively are. Deng argues, however, that under certain circumstances, public policy may need to scrutinize self-perceptions that not only are incongruent with objective facts, but distort the structures and framework of national identity. Such incongruities may be projected to the national framework to create cleavages and threaten national unity. Almost by definition civil wars involve elements of a national identity crisis.

Deng attributes the crisis of identity in the Sudan to two overlapping sets of discrepancies. One has to do with the racial and cultural anomalies of Arabism. While the sophisticated, politically correct members of the Northern elite now distinguish between the racial and cultural elements of Arabism and associate themselves only with the latter, Northern Sudanese Arabs, who constitute 39 percent of the country's population, generally believe that they are both racially and culturally Arab. This perception reflects only a part of a more complex makeup in which the physical evidence of their African heritage is prominent, though denied or relegated to a secondary level. Even in cultural and

‘

‘

religious terms, Deng contends, the North has developed an eclectic mold that defies simplistic descriptions. The second discrepancy arises when the official perception of identity is Arab and Islamic, in a context in which the majority of the people are non-Arab and the overwhelming majority of the Muslims practice an Africanized or indigenized version of Islam that is flexible and respects diversity. This discrepancy between exclusive group identities and the definition of the national framework constitutes the national identity crisis.

The core of the problem is therefore not so much what individuals or groups perceive themselves to be, distorted as that may be, but the projection of those self-perceptions by the ruling or dominant elite to the collective framework of the state which thereby becomes inherently discriminatory. So, whether individual Sudanese define themselves racially and culturally as Arabs or Africans, as Muslims, Christians, or adherents of traditional religions is in itself not a policy issue; it is the definition of the Sudan as an Arab, African, Islamic, or secular state that is contested, since it has serious implications for the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country.

Deng describes three options for the Sudan. One is to construct a national framework with which all Sudanese, at least the pivotal groups from all regions of the country, can genuinely identify and participate on a more or less equal footing. The second is to create a framework of loose federal or confederal unity in diversity, with economic and security arrangements that make it possible for the regions, especially North and South, to coexist peacefully. Failing agreement on such a framework, amicable partition, with agreement on regional cooperation, is the remaining option.

Francis M. Deng held a number of senior posts in the Sudanese foreign service, among them those of minister of state for foreign affairs and ambassador to Canada, Scandinavia, and the United States. He is currently senior fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies program at the Brookings Institution. In 1992 he was named by UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali as his representative on internally displaced

persons worldwide.

This book has had a long gestation period during which many individuals and institutions have made valuable contributions. Deng first became interested in identity as a factor in the Sudanese conflict in the early 1970s. His more recent return to the subject occurred when he was named one of the first Distinguished Fellows of the U.S. Institute

of Peace. Since joining the Brookings Institution, War of Visions has been one of his principal research projects.

The author would like to express his special gratitude to the U.S. Institute of Peace and its staff for their support and encouragement. In particular he thanks John Norton Moore, former chairman of the board; Robert F. Turner, interim president; Samuel Lewis, former president; Charles Smith, legal counsel; Michael Lund, director of the Jennings Randolph program; Barbara Cullicott, program administrator; and Jerry Jenko, research assistant. At Brookings, the author expresses his special appreciation to his colleagues John D. Steinbruner and Terrence R. Lyons, whose comments on the various drafts he found both supportive and constructive. Lyons also assisted with the review of the relevant literature. Wendy J. Glassmire, Steve Schwartz, and Khalid Medani contributed substantially to the research work. Medani in particular helped conduct interviews with Sudanese politicians and intellectuals. This book was verified by Hisham Wahby, Agnieszka Paczynska, and Chris Watkins. Beth Elzinger-Marshall, Gretchen M. Griener, Kirsten Reinicke, and Kris McDevitt performed the demanding task of typing numerous versions of the manuscript. William Kenah and Deborah Styles edited the manuscript; Carlotta. Ribar proofread the pages; and Max Franke prepared the index.

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BRUCE K. MAC LAURY
President

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The Sudan: Administrative Subdivisions



Source: Joseph V. Montville, *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington Books, 1991), p. 345. Reprinted with permission.

The Sudan, Showing Southern Provinces and Administrative Centers



Source: Minority Rights Group Report, "The Southern Sudan," 1988.

Government Offensive, May 1994



Introduction

Identity is used in this book to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture. In Africa, as the case of Somalia has so tragically demonstrated, clan, lineage, and family are often vital elements of identity. Territory or region as an element of identification overlaps with one or more of these factors and is therefore a complementary or an affirmative consideration. Whatever the determining factors, identity is a concept that gives a deeply rooted psychological and social meaning to the individual in the context of group dynamics. As groups vie for power, material resources, and other values, these dynamics may involve cooperation, competition, or conflict. The source of conflict lies not so much in the mere fact of differences as in the degree to which the interacting identities and their overriding goals are mutually accommodating or incompatible. In the context of the nation-state, conflict of identities occurs when groups, or more accurately their elites, rebel against what they see as intolerable oppression by the dominant group, often expressed in denial of recognition, exclusion from the mainstream, marginalization, and perhaps the threat of cultural annihilation or even physical elimination. Under strong and authoritarian political systems, as was the case with the colonial state, the Soviet Union, and the socialist countries of Eastern Europe, disaffected groups may be too oppressed to assert their demands effectively. But where the state is weak, as is the case in post-colonial Africa, or the oppressive lid is lifted, as in the former Soviet Union and in eastern Europe, ethnic and religious tensions that have long been repressed begin to manifest themselves in violence, threatening the state with fragmentation, disintegration, and perhaps total collapse. That is the danger posed by the war of visions that has raged intermittently in the Sudan for decades.

It is an irony of history that much of the present misery associated with the civil war in the Sudan should be the result of its greatest promise as a microcosm of Africa and a crossroads between the conti-

nent and the Middle East. The complexity of the challenges represented by the Sudan's racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious composition can perhaps be illustrated best by a personal experience. Soon after my arrival as ambassador of the Sudan in Washington in 1974, a senior official at the state department asked me how, given a choice, I would want my country to be classified for administrative purposes. Should the Sudan be classified as a Middle Eastern or an African country, and within the continent should it be considered part of the Arab Muslim North or of sub-Saharan black Africa? "Whichever category seems most obvious, I suggest that the Sudan be classified in the other," was my response. "In that way, we expand our identity and benefit from both."

The experience is not unique. Sudanese the world over confront similar questions about their national identity in the regional and international framework. Although this is seen as a potential source of enrichment and pride, views from within the country are by no means unified on the question of what the Sudan really is. Far from it; these external perspectives only portray the bare outlines of an enormously complicated internal configuration, fraught with diversities, tensions, contradictions, and violent confrontations. The size and location of the country alone indicate the monumental dimensions of the configuration and the crises of identities that it embraces. Geographically the largest country in Africa, the Sudan neighbors eight countries — Egypt and Libya to the north; Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Zaire to the south; and Central African Republic and Chad to the west — and is separated from Saudi Arabia only by the Red Sea. As might be expected from its location, the Sudan is a country of immense racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity.

The diversities involved in the country's composition are most often described as falling into two main divisions, North and South. The North, two-thirds of the country in land and population, is inhabited by indigenous tribal groups. The dominant among these groups intermarried with incoming Arab traders and, over centuries, dating back to time immemorial but heightened by the advent of Islam in the seventh century, produced a genetically mixed African-Arab racial and cultural hybrid. The resulting racial characteristics look very similar to those of all the African

groups cutting across the continent below the Sahara, from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia in the east, Chad and Niger and Mali in the center, and Mauritania and Senegal to the

west. Indeed, the Arabic phrase Bilad al-Sudan, from which the Sudan derives its name, means Land of the Blacks and refers to all these sub-Saharan territories.

Unlike the situation in these countries, where, with the exception of Mauritania, people identify themselves as Africans, the northern Sudanese see themselves as Arabs and deny the strongly African element in their skin color and physical features. They associate these features with the negroid race and see it as the mother race of slaves, inferior and demeaned. A prominent northern Sudanese scholar and statesman has even suggested that the Sudan should change its name because it is reminiscent of a denigrated racial label.¹ Having been permitted by Islam and the assimilationist Arab culture to pass into the supposedly superior Arab-Islamic identity northern Sudanese “Arabs” vehemently resist any attempt by the non-Arab population to identify the country with black Africa. The words Arabism and Africanism have multiple meanings in the Sudanese context. Most northern groups who claim genealogical links with Arab ancestry believe they are racially and culturally Arab, complemented by Islam. This is a subjective and largely benign self-perception. Urbane northerners sometimes refer to their rural populace as Arabs, with the derogatory connotation of unsophisticated nomads, a paradoxical view of an identity that is otherwise acclaimed with pride. Then there is the politicized, nationalistic view of Arabism that is both nationally based and internationally pan-Arabist. While identification with this concept of Arabism is racially and culturally rooted, with Islam as its complement, the sophisticated, politically correct northern elites tend to see it as a cultural phenomenon that is divested of race or color, an interpretation based on objective factors, which suits the anomalies of the country quite well but has the effect of concealing the racist dimension of the subjective factor.

Africanism also has different meanings and connotations for different groups. Generally speaking, it encompasses the racial factor (black or negroid) with the cultural connotations of that definition. This is the aspect from which the Sudanese Arabs are inclined to distance themselves. Another aspect of Africanism with which the country is more readily

identified is geography a physical reality encompassing peoples of various races, cultures, religions, and nationalities. To the southern Sudanese, as indeed to most black Africans, Africanism has acquired a dimension that has racial, cultural, and national connota-

tions. In the Sudanese context, the more the North asserts its Arabness, the more the South asserts Africanness as a counter-identity.

In both the North and the South, then, identity factors have been moved from the realm of benign self-perception to the politically contested stage of national symbolism with the associated implications of shaping and sharing power, wealth, and other national values. Social scientists generally emphasize that what people think they are counts more than what they objectively are. In certain circumstances, in particular in the pluralistic framework of the modern state, public policy may need to scrutinize self-perceptions that not only are incongruent with objective facts, but distort the shared structures and framework of the nation that involves multiple identities.

There are also non-Arab communities in the North which, though large in numbers proportional to the Arabized tribes, have been partially assimilated by their conversion to Islam and adoption of Arabic as the language of communication with the other tribes. Since Islam, Arabic, and the racial and ethnic concept of Arabism are viewed in the Sudan as closely intertwined, these groups have been virtually adopted by the dominant Arab groups as "orphans" of Arabism, redeemed from the degraded status of their slave origin as blacks. Increasingly however, these non-Arab tribes of the North realize they have much in common with their non-Arab southern compatriots, and a bond is being formed between them that contradicts a simple North-South dichotomy.

In the South, the remaining third of the country in land and population, the African identity in its racial and cultural composition has withstood the onslaught of Arabism and Islam. Northern incursions southward met with strong resistance as early as the hostile encounters of the slave trade that peaked in the nineteenth century.

The state of affairs now prevailing in the Sudan is the culmination of a long historical process in which northerners and southerners were the principal antagonists in the war of racial, cultural, and religious identities. The starting point in this configuration is that virtually all ethnic groups in

the country have their primary roots in the black African tribes. Evidence of this fact is still visible in all the tribes, including those in the North who identify themselves as Arabs. Their identification with Arabism is, however, the result of a process in which races and religions were ranked, with Arabs and Muslims respected as free, superior, and a race of slave masters, while Negroes, blacks, and hea-

thens were viewed as a legitimate target of slavery if they were not in fact already slaves. Given a situation where non-Arabs were allowed to alter their lot dramatically by converting to Islam, learning to speak the Arabic language, intermarrying with the Arabs, and identifying genealogically with the master race, the move to assimilation was irresistible. In due course, so liberal was the process that the claim to Arab ancestry could be made from fictional assertions that usually did not need to be verified.

Full acceptance was not automatic, however, and racial stratification has persisted. The darker the color of the skin, the less authentic the claim to Arab ancestry and the greater the likelihood of being looked down on as of slave origin. The evidence of this supposedly inferior stock is rampantly visible among the so-called Arabs, often more visible in some family members than in others and reflected to a degree in every Sudanese Arab. The implications of this condition for the psychology of racial attitudes must undoubtedly be profound and deeply unnerving. But since the objective of identifying with the Arabs is to enhance pride and self-esteem, any fears and anxieties must be countered by projecting an aura of self-assurance and racial pride. For the same reason, northern racial pride focuses on the right brown color of skin, considered the standard for the North and therefore for the Sudan. To be too light for a Sudanese is to risk being considered a foreigner, a Khawaja (European), a Middle Eastern Arab, or worse, a Halabi, a term used for a Gypsy-type racial group, considered among the lowest of the light-skinned races. The other side of the coin is, of course, looking down on the black race as inferior, a condition from which one has mercifully been redeemed. Northern Sudanese racism and cultural chauvinism, therefore, condemns both the very dark and the very light.

Until recently calling the southern Sudanese "slaves," *abeed*, to their faces was a common practice. And even now, while northerners are more discreet about the slur, it is still frequently used in intimate circles and more openly in jocular conversations. The term *abid* (singular for *abeed*) is the exact equivalent of "nigger" in American popular usage. When northerners are caught in the act of such an insult, they often give as their defense, "We are all slaves of God," an uncanny admission of a

deep-seated slave mentality.

The irony is that while northerners regard southerners and Africans in general as slaves, virtually every Sudanese Arab has visible evidence

of his African origin in skin color, and most can be assumed to have some genetic heritage from a slave origin. In contrast, southerners are the progeny of those Africans who escaped enslavement. This basic fact escapes northern consciousness. A liberal northerner writing about the discrimination that southerners suffer from northerners noted: "Similar to the experiences of former slave populations elsewhere in the world, including in the United States, southern Sudanese are treated with contempt as an inferior population."² The erroneous view that southerners were once slaves and still suffer from the stigma of slavery is entrenched even in liberal northern circles.

As described, even if there were no non-Arab tribes in the northern or southern Sudan, the North would still have an identity issue to reckon with. What makes the identity crisis in the Sudan particularly acute, however, is the fact that the so-called Arabs want to fashion the entire country on the basis of their Arab-Islamic identity. They have succeeded to a degree in assimilating the non-Arab communities in the North. The South, with a bitter historical memory and a colonial legacy of separate development in the modern context, is decidedly resistant to racial, cultural, and religious assimilation into the Arab-Islamic mold of the North. It is, however, not the mere fact of integration of African and Arab elements to which the South is opposed; rather, it is the political domination of the North and the imposition of its racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity on the whole country that the South resents and uncompromisingly opposes.

This book is an account of how the Sudanese got to their present situation, entrenched in the chronic conflict that has devastated the country since independence. It poses the question whether a common identity that binds across the intrinsic diversity is feasible and desirable or whether separate identities and ultimate political partition are the more realistic course. The struggle over national identity manifests itself at two principal levels: one has to do with understanding what the northern Sudanese identity is in the light of its historical formation, which has left the people with layers of civilizations, racial characteristics, and cultural traditions; the other concerns the implications for unity in a modern,

pluralistic nation-state.

PART 1 Background

Chapter 1 Overview of the Conflict

Highlighting the salient elements in the Sudanese conflict may help to illustrate the complexities of the nation's situation. Foremost of these is the historical process that has dichotomized the country into North and South. Historians have argued that without the South there would be no North.¹ This is even more true of the South; without the confrontation with the North, the still vivid history of rapacious invasions by northern slave raiders, and the more recent attempts by the post-independence governments to dominate the southern peoples, there would be no South as a viable political entity. A corollary of the process is the polarization that has afflicted the country with a crisis of national identity. This crisis has in turn led the parties to adopt extreme positions, which are now represented by Islamic fundamentalism in the North and a radical counterforce in the South. Together these factors pose important policy considerations on which rest the prospects for conflict resolution and the choices the parties will have to make in addressing the critical issues involved.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The historical process that has separated the Arab Muslim North and the African South has its roots in the Arabization and Islamization of the North and in the resistance to those forces in the South. The assimilation processes favored the Arab religion and culture over the African race, religions, and cultures, which remained prevalent in the South.²

Sudanese contact and interaction with the Middle East via Egypt date back thousands of years before Christ, taking the form of trade in ivory, gold, and other commodities. Arab traders settled among the indigenous population and integrated themselves. They had the advantages of wealth, with which the Sudanese wanted to associate, and

eventually the Sudanese identified with the Arabs. The process intensified after the advent of Islam in the seventh century. The Arab Muslim empire invaded the Sudan, and, in the seventh and ninth centuries, concluded peace accords with the northern peoples of Nubia and Beja. These accords established remote Arab controls over the country, opened the channels of communication with the Arab world, guaranteed freedom of movement for the Arabs, protected Arab trade, and safeguarded Arab settlement, but otherwise left the Sudanese in relative peace, autonomy, and independence. Although the Arab settlers were traders and not rulers, their privileged position, their more cosmopolitan and universalizing religious culture, and their superior material wealth, combined with the liberal assimilationist Arab-Islamic tradition, opened gates to universal brotherhood and made them an appealing class for intermarriage with the leading Sudanese families. As Arabs did not come with their wives, and as Islam did not permit the marriage of Muslim women to non-Muslims, intermarriage was a one-way street. It is generally accepted that the descendants of the Arabs succeeded to the leadership positions of their maternal families through the system of matrilineal succession then prevalent in the North. The patriarchal system then took over and perpetuated the Arab-Muslim male line. The children identified with the paternal line, and, in the course of time, the Arab element predominated. The pre-Islamic system was not so much overthrown as "turned inside out."³

Arab migration and settlement in the South, in contrast to the situation in the North, were discouraged by natural barriers, the difficulties of living conditions, including the harshness of the tropical climate for a people accustomed to the desert, and the resistance of the warrior Nilotic tribes. The few Arab adventurers who engaged in slave raids were not interested in Arabizing and Islamizing the southerners, as that would have taken their prey from dar al-harb (land of war) and placed them in the category of dar al-Islam (land of Islam), thereby protecting them from slavery.

In 1820-21 joint Turkish and Egyptian forces invaded and took over the northern regions of the Sudan. The Islam practiced by these rulers was

hardly recognized as such by the Sudanese, who characterized them as foreign infidels. The Turkish and Egyptian slave traders used the North as a base of operations for their incursions into the South. Reaction to the Turks and Egyptians came from both North and South and had a unifying effect on the country as these sections pulled to-

gether to resist foreign domination. The popular unrest culminated in a successful revolt, which began in 1881 and brought Muhammad Ahmed al-Mahdi to power in 1885. The Mahdi, as this leader was popularly known, was seen as a messiah. He used Islam as a tool to raise support in the North. The South, though it did not convert, saw the religion of the Mahdists as a tool for liberation, a way to organize opposition to the foreign rulers. When the Mahdist government gained power, however, slave raids into southern territory continued. Islam was turned against the South, thus becoming a divisive element.

Colonial intervention, known as the Reconquest, led to the British-dominated Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1899-1955), which ended slavery and nominally unified the country. The decision to administer the North and the South separately however, reinforced Arabism and Islam in the North, encouraged southern development along indigenous African lines, and introduced Christian missionary education and rudiments of Western civilization as elements of modernization in the South. Interaction between the two sets of people was strongly discouraged.

While the colonial administration invested considerably in the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the North, the South remained isolated, secluded, and undeveloped. The principal objective of colonial rule in the region was the establishment and maintenance of law and order. The separate administration of the North and the South left open the option that the South might eventually be annexed to one of the East African colonies.

Suddenly, only nine years before independence, the British reversed the policy of separate development, but they had neither the time nor the political will to put in place constitutional arrangements that would ensure protection for the South in a united Sudan. Since independence, ruthless attempts to dominate, Islamize, and Arabize the South have characterized the policies of successive governments. Southern resistance to Arab-Muslim domination and assimilation has also persisted commensurately. The result has been an internecine war of visions.⁴

The war of visions between the North and the South first broke out in August 1955, just four months before independence was declared on January 1, 1956. Armed conflict has been largely between successive governments in Khartoum and liberation movements based in the southern part of the country. The preoccupying concern among the

northerners at independence was to correct the divisive effect of the separatist policies of the colonial administration. The logical response was for the government to seek the unity of the country by pursuing the forced assimilation of the South through Arabization and Islamization, which, for the South, was tantamount to replacing British colonialism with Arab hegemony. Southern resistance intensified first in the political call for a federal arrangement and later in an armed struggle for secession.

The political impasse created by the situation in the South prompted the military to take over in 1958, only two years after independence, with the aim of pursuing the strategies of Arabization and Islamization more vigorously, unhampered by parliamentary democracy. The ruthlessness with which these assimilation policies were pursued in the South aggravated the conflict, which became a full-fledged civil war in the 1960s. The effect of that war on the political situation led to the popular uprising that overthrew the military regime in 1964. The oppressive policies toward the South were temporarily relaxed. With the return of democracy less than a year later, the traditional political parties assumed control and resumed the assimilation policies with a vengeance. The level of repression was higher than ever before. As the violence escalated, the differences between the North and the South became sharper, and the level of political instability rose. This vicious cycle was broken in 1969, when another military junta, this time under the leadership of Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiri, seized power.

After displaying an ambivalent attitude toward the rebels, Nimeiri's government eventually negotiated with the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) and in 1972 concluded the Addis Ababa Agreement, which granted the South regional autonomy.⁵ The regime, however, remained under pressure from the conservative and radical fundamentalist elements and, in particular, the sectarian parties and the Muslim Brotherhood, with whom Nimeiri eventually entered into an uneasy alliance. Nimeiri also underwent a personal conversion, becoming a born-again Muslim, even though he still hoped that through religious reforms he could pull the rug from under the feet of the sectarian opposition leaders and the fundamentalists with whom he had a restless

partnership. He also hoped to remove the anomaly of liberal democracy in the South, which was incongruous with the national system of an authoritarian presidency. For these and other political reasons, Nimeiri gradually eroded the South's autonomy, moving relentlessly toward imposing Islamic law, or shari'a, and establishing an

Islamic state. Eventually he unilaterally abrogated the Addis Ababa Agreement, triggering the formation of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and its military wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), whose declared objective was the creation of a new, secular, democratic, and pluralistic Sudan. Within only two years of the resumption of hostilities, a popular uprising known as intifada led to Nimeiri's own political demise in April 1985.

Neither the transitional government that followed Nimeiri's overthrow nor the subsequent elected government was able to reach a settlement with the SPLM-SPLA. The war in the South moved northward, into the non-Arab areas of the Nuba in southern Kordofan, the Ingassana in southern Blue Nile, and to a lesser degree, the Fur in the western region of Darfur. Although the imposition of shari'a took the limelight, because of the association of Islam with Arabism, this war became increasingly racial, remaining the greatest threat to the stability and the development of the country. Famines caused by natural disasters and by the use of food as a weapon in the conflict added a heavy toll to the war tragedy.⁶ During both regimes intensive efforts toward peace and humanitarian relief were exerted by the ruling political parties and the SPLM-SPLA. Important meetings and talks took place between representative groups and leaders on both sides.

When it seemed that the national will was united behind the peace process, the situation suddenly changed even more radically in favor of the religious right, which saw in the compromise a threat to the Islamic trend. On June 30, 1989, a radical Islamic faction in the military took over, this time under the leadership of General Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir, whose Islamist policies have widened the cleavage with the SPLM-SPLA and sharpened the issues and options confronting the nation. As a result, religion has become a highly divisive factor in a manner that is beginning to reactivate calls for separation even within the SPLM-SPLA, which, as a movement, had been committed to unity.⁷

Meanwhile, outside the traditional southern heartland, regional movements in the Nuba area of southern Kordofan, Darfur, and

potentially in southern Blue Nile are threatening the central government with a widespread wave of rebellions by the marginalized non-Arab regions. This makes the SPLM-SPLA vision of a united, pluralistic, democratic Sudan potentially more realistic in long-term perspective than is often assumed. Although fighting for equality within the framework of unity might be a tactic aimed at separation as the ulti-

mate objective, the struggle for a new Sudan may have acquired its own momentum. It offers a counterforce to the notion of Arab-Islamic hegemony pursued by the Bashir government and its fundamentalist supporters.

Analysis of the historical evolution of the North-South conflict of identities reveals a contradictory situation. On the one hand, the so-called Arab North has a great many African elements, which it shares with the non-Arab African South; on the other hand, self-perceptions in the North and in the South have consolidated racial, cultural, and religious identities and attitudes that are basically sustained by confrontation and conflict. It is difficult to see how the North could have evolved as a viable entity without the South as a unifying challenge, if not a clear threat. That is also true of the South, which, without the North, would not have developed the unity of purpose that, though still precarious, has characterized all rebel movements despite chronic tribal rivalries and divisiveness.

CRISIS OF IDENTITY

For the purposes of this study, identity is seen as a function of how people identify themselves and are identified in race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion and how such identification determines or influences their participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of their country. Defined in those terms, identity is of little consequence in most modern, democratic, and pluralistic countries or societies where discrimination on the basis of race, skin color, national origin, religion, or gender is forbidden by law. Stated in positive terms, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms also imply that an individual's identity is accommodated through tolerance for diversity. But in some countries or societies these elements of identity are important factors in the sense of belonging to the nation and participation in the political, economic, and social process. In tribal societies, for example, the family or the clan is important to membership; in theocracies, religion is a critical factor; in a racially defined state, as in the apartheid South Africa, race determines participation; in a context of ethnic nationalism, as in the states of the former Yugoslavia and of the

former Soviet Union, ethnicity is a social determinant. Anyone who does not belong has to make a choice — to leave

the country, to accept discrimination as inherent in the situation, or to endeavor to change the situation to be more equitable.

Individuals or minorities without power usually succumb to one of the first two options, either emigrating or acquiescing. But where the group discriminated against is a majority, as in South Africa, or a significant minority, capable of exerting influence and effecting radical changes or major reforms, then the option for change becomes an irresistible temptation. The case of the Sudan falls into this last category.

The Sudan is considered primarily an Arab state, and that has important implications for the educational system (the medium of instruction and the curricula), cultural programs, and foreign relations. In all respects, Africa is nominally significant and is often acknowledged only as a setting of physical belonging or as an object of superficial diplomatic maneuvers, without any nationalistic, sentimental, or cultural connotation, except in an occasional poem or song of social protest. Yet the non-Arab population in both the North and the South constitutes the majority, albeit subordinated and marginalized by the Arab-dominated concept of national identity.

In this sense, the Sudan has much in common with South Africa under apartheid, although discrimination expressed itself in strikingly different ways. In South Africa, apartheid excluded non-Whites. In the Sudan, Arabism both excludes, in the sense that it discriminates against those who are not Arabized or Islamized, and includes, in the sense that it fosters assimilation, which condescendingly implies rejection of or disregard for the non-Arab and non-Muslim elements. Even when successfully accomplished, assimilation elevates one to the status of an adopted or honorary Arab, still lacking full equality with pure or full-fledged Arabs, who often claim to trace their lineage back to the Arabian peninsula and in some cases to the early followers of Muhammad.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CRISIS

In today's context, the conflict has crystallized between the non-Arab Sudanese, primarily represented by the SPLM-SPLA, and the Arab-

Muslims, represented by successive regimes in Khartoum. Since the hostilities were resumed in 1983 after President Nimeiri's unilateral abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement, the crisis of national iden-

tity has also intensified. But contradictory trends have characterized the conflict. The war has escalated considerably, the issues have crystallized increasingly, and the options before the parties seem obvious. And yet the positions of those in conflict are now further apart than ever and seemingly unbridgeable. The twin ideological trends that have figured prominently in these developments are Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism in both the North and the South.

The relationship between religion and the state, in particular the role of shari'a — Islamic Law, which comprehensively prescribes the righteous path for the Muslim community in public and private affairs — as the law of the land, has emerged as the central factor in the conflict. The full significance of this factor can be appreciated only if religion is seen as a starting point into the complex political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country. Religion becomes pivotal in defining the identity and status of individuals and groups, determining who gets what from the system. Furthermore, religion and race relations are intertwined, since Islam in the Sudan is closely connected with Arabism as a racial, ethnic, and cultural phenomenon.

Although the issue of an Islamic constitution has been debated since independence, Nimeiri's imposition of shari'a on the country by presidential decree in September 1983 placed the issue on the public agenda almost irrevocably. After Nimeiri's overthrow, the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan al Muslimeen), a radical group from the religious right, reorganized itself into a broader-based political party, the National Islamic Front (NIF). In the parliamentary elections of 1986 the NIF won the third largest number of seats. The group's Islamic national agenda was endorsed and significantly reinforced by General Bashir, who, in alliance with the NIF, seized power on June 30, 1989, in the name of the "Revolution for National Salvation." After a period of silence, ostensibly to study the situation, the SPLM-SPLA condemned the coup as an Islamist move engineered by the NIF and secretly committed to the division of the country along religious lines.⁸ The SPLM-SPLA did agree, however, to participate with the government in peace talks, which covered such generalities as preservation of the unity of the country, adoption of a

federal system of government, and correction of past inequities in economic and social development among the regions.⁹ The talks appear to be in the realm of public relations rhetoric, and no appreciable progress has been made on the peace front.

The rising profiles of the Islamic trend as a political force that can

significantly influence national politics and of the SPLM-SPLA as its counterforce reflect the development of two important revolutionary patterns from the North and the South, with the traditionalism of Sudanese society as the incubator. In the North, conservatism follows Arab-Islamic lines, while in the South it follows indigenous African lines. In both, society is largely dominated by family or kinship ties and an ancestrally oriented lineage system that stratifies people according to descent, age, and gender. Leaders tend to be from politically and religiously dominant families; men dominate women; and children must show filial piety.

The northern Muslim community is, as one British observer put it, 'A society in which young men were seen and not heard, in which a grey-haired son did not take a seat in the presence of his father, and abstained from lighting a cigarette when travelling in company with his elder brother....'¹⁰ In the South, lineage-based political and social structures were qualified by an age-set system that ensured institutionalized generational competition, balance, and complementarity. While the elders engaged in the orderly discussion of public affairs and the peaceful settlement of disputes, youth warrior age-sets found their status and dignity in warfare and other activities associated with physical vitality, courage, and resilience. As features of organized group action, these activities could be carried out in open challenge to the elders, who accepted the defiance ambivalently as an exaggeration of what was otherwise a necessary military service and a source of pride and dignity among their youth.

In the Muslim North radical conservatism was reinvigorated in a fundamentalist way by the Mahdist Islamic revolution, which in 1885 ousted the Turko-Egyptian administration that had ruled the country since 1821. When joint Anglo-Egyptian forces reconquered the Sudan in 1899 and established a condominium administration, they found it prudent to respect the Arab-Islamic values and institutions of the North to avoid provoking rebellion. Support for the cultural values of the North constrained state formation and modernization along Western lines. One British governor-general even described the Anglo-Egyptian

condominium government as Islamic.¹¹

The conservatism of northern society prevailed even as it was subtly undermined by the undercurrents of the educational system and the modernization process from the West. Because self-assertiveness against family elders, in particular the patriarch, is ruled out, educated

northern youth tended to challenge society politically through the ideological tools of communism and the Muslim Brotherhood.¹² Both were radical, though in opposite ways, and both represented well-conceived ideological and political systems that transcended the tensions and constraints of the local context. Furthermore, they offered opportunities for widening associations and loyalties beyond the confines of traditional kinship.

During the 1950s and 1960s, most northern youth in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning were members of one of these two ideological and political camps, with the Democratic Front — the umbrella organization of the Communist party — having a slight numerical and organizational advantage over the Muslim Brotherhood. Opposition to virtually all governments was then a conspicuous feature of student politics in the Sudan, and it was well known that after they graduated and joined the establishment, most northerners would abandon their earlier affiliation with these two extremes.¹³ Yet, ironically, although these movements were locally motivated, they were among the most powerful and effective ideological movements in the African and Arab worlds.¹⁴

In 1971, after an abortive coup against Nimeiri that was masterminded by the Communist party, the regime clamped down on the communists and their leftist sympathizers, virtually eliminating them from the Sudanese political scene. That left the Muslim Brotherhood as the only political force challenging the traditional parties. Its position became even more pronounced when Nimeiri, in his move toward Islam, allowed it to be the only politically active party. Even though the Communist party was reactivated after Nimeiri's overthrow, it has not been able to rival the Muslim Brotherhood, especially under its embracing organization of the NIF.

The NIF tends to attract the educated young people, many of whom it lures early through scholarships and promises of career opportunities. It therefore enjoys an intellectual and professional appeal that supersedes the sectarian basis of influence among the traditional political parties, the Umma and the Democratic Unionist party (DUP), which are led by

educated elites. Because of their traditional orientation, however, the following of these parties among the more enlightened class appears to be weakening, unless they succeed in reversing their sectarian orientation and broadening the basis of their appeal. As the religious foundation of their sectarianism diminishes, the appeal of the

NIF to the religious sentiments of the Muslim constituency, in contrast to that of the sectarian political parties, is likely to broaden its influence among educated Muslims of sectarian background. Because these sectarian parties and the NIF feed on the same religious ground, they are at the same time potential allies and adversaries. Events before the June 1989 coup tended to reflect this ambivalence, as the NIF shifted repeatedly from being in the opposition to participating in coalition governments with one or both of the leading sectarian parties.¹⁵

Although the British administered ethnic communities in the South through their traditional leaders, protecting or preserving them to evolve gradually along the lines of their indigenous cultures, they did not show the same degree of sensitivity, recognition, and deference to the African cultures that they showed to the Arab-Islamic culture of the North. On the contrary, Christian missionaries in the South introduced a system of education and a language that combined the vernacular and English, encouraging a Western value system that undermined traditional cultures among educated youth. Because the state had to maintain neutrality in its dealings with the competing missionary societies, the notion of separation of church and state was accepted as an essential feature of the modern nation-state.

The reaction of educated southern youth to the traditional conservatism of both South and North has been less ambivalent than that of northern youth. For one thing, the process of modernization associated with state formation and Western education has itself been revolutionary among southerners. At the national level, the reaction of educated youth of the South has been expressed through two rebel movements, the first by the SSLM, which aimed at separating the South from the North, and the current one by the SPLM-SPLA, aimed at creating a new secular and democratic Sudan. What is remarkable about this ambitious goal is the extent to which the SPLM-SPLA shifted the southern outlook from that of a minority, struggling for recognition and a degree of autonomy in a marginalized corner of the country, to one of self-assertiveness, pride, and dignity in the struggle for a democratic Sudan.

The various movements that have come and gone in the South have consistently called for secession from the North, and it is widely recognized that the overwhelming majority of southerners would opt for separation. The stated goal of the SPLM-SPLA — preserving the unity of the country by creating a “new Sudan” liberated from any discrimi-

nation based on race, ethnicity, religion, culture of gender — has therefore been perceived as incongruous. It is not entirely inconceivable that the non-Arab elements in the North could in the long run ally themselves with the South to bring about such a change; the movement might indeed have come to believe that this might be imminent when it was militarily strong in the field. It is now widely recognized, however, that the objective of the SPLM-SPLA is unattainable in the short run. The tendency therefore, is either to see the leaders of the movement as callous militants who simply want to prosecute an endless war or to suspect that they must have a hidden separatist agenda.

The truth probably lies somewhere in between. Although separation would be the first choice of most southerners, it is obvious that separatism does not resonate well worldwide, and especially in Africa. The SPLM-SPLA leaders obviously realized that fighting for justice or equality is more likely to win sympathy and support than calling for secession. In their calculation, even the separatists stand a better chance of achieving their objectives within the framework of equitable unity cooperating with those motivated by the prospects of a national alliance behind the goal of a new, democratic, secular, and pluralistic Sudan. Tactically the leadership of the SPLM-SPLA is following a multifaceted policy that does not exclude and indeed discreetly prefers separation as the ultimate goal. What is remarkable is the degree to which the leadership has made the rank and file understand and accept this rather complex reasoning and strategy. At one point, the rhetoric of liberating the whole country seemed to be taken seriously and was emphatically reflected in the SPLA morale-boosting martial songs. But the driving force for the fighting men and women has clearly been separation. This was often expressed in the words, “We know what we want”, a popular response to the question, “What is the SPLA fighting for?”

The stated ideal of a new, united, democratic Sudan is now being challenged by a faction that broke away from the mainstream movement in August 1991. This group, the so-called Nasir group (later renamed SPLM-SPLA — United), originally comprised three of the twelve SPLA commanders — Riek Machar, Lam Akol, and Gordon Kong. These rebel

commanders, though motivated by personal rivalries and ambitions, have explicitly advocated separation, among other objectives. And yet they entered into alliance with their principal adversaries, the regime in Khartoum, against the mainstream movement led by John Garang. The alliance is particularly ominous in that the govern-

ment is unequivocally opposed to separation. However, the mainstream still holds on to the delicate balance between the wider framework of unity and the fallback position of self-determination, and that approach still seems to be supported by the preponderance of the fighting forces.

The competing identities in the North and the South have evolved through parallel phases. Both had a traditional stage dominated by tribal structures and value systems. This evolved through a transitional stage, in which sectarianism predominated in the North, and Western Christian missionary-oriented education extended horizons among the educated in the South. Now the forces of modernization compete between Arab-Islamic principles, represented by the NIF in the North, and the Western model of a secular pluralistic state, advocated by the SPLM-SPLA in the South. While the principal cleavage remains North-South, internal differences are generating further fragmentation or segmentation. In the North, the revivalist Islamic agenda is opposed by both the sectarian political parties and the liberal secularist elements, which joined hands with the SPLM-SPLA in a National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Its manifest objective is the overthrow of the regime and the promotion of a pluralistic democracy in which the role of religion remains ambiguously defined but is certain to be more liberal than is now the case. In the South, the SPLM-SPLA is also divided on the objectives of the movement, with some preferring an explicit commitment to self-determination leading to secession and the mainstream still tactically espousing the goal of a new Sudan with self-determination as an option.

The critical question is whether these two parallel visions, which originated separately in the North and the South but are now competing for the soul of the nation, are incompatible or are reconcilable in the process of nation building. Judging from the developments since independence, the prospects are not encouraging. But the challenge recognized by both sides is one of building a united nation, unless the circumstances dictate otherwise.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Several alternative policy approaches recommend themselves from this

brief analysis of the North-South conflict of identities. One approach assumes the overriding goal of national unity and then builds

on those elements most likely to achieve it. A major factor in this approach is the argument that the genetic composition of the country does not support any claims to racial or cultural purity, far less superiority since there is a significant African element in the North that still links the population to the non-Arab groups within the North and the South. The African identity therefore, provides the common denominator on which a uniting national identity can be based.

The message this argument contains is a bitter pill to swallow for those committed to the Arab identity: it essentially means telling the North that it has been laboring under a notion of Arab identity that is fictitious. It is an identity based on claims that are not supported by genetics or history and it has divided the nation in a way that can no longer be sustained. If northerners value the unity of their nation above their self-delusion that they are Arabs, then they must courageously scrutinize their self-perception, explore the bonds of common ancestry with their non-Arab compatriots, and endeavor to help build a nation that is grounded on the uniting factors and enriched by its diversities. A similar message would also be targeted to southerners to make them realize that what divides them from the North is not as profound as has always been assumed, that northerners are partly the progeny of their African ancestors who were captured and taken away from the South as slaves, and that the challenge of building a united and strong nation now makes it incumbent on them to close ranks and explore their common origins.

A second argument recognizes that the identities of North and South have evolved into sharply contrasting racial, cultural, and religious self-perceptions. North and South are further characterized by different standards of living and varying levels of economic, social, and cultural development. In the North the sense of pride and dignity the Sudanese Arabs gain from their self-perceived heritage would prevent them from shedding their Arab skin to resume their long-discarded African identity. For them religion is a smoke screen for a policy of racial domination, and the price of an African-based national unity is too high. The southern Sudanese, too, are proud of their race — which has survived recurrent Arab invasions for slaves — and contemptuous of a race they consider

morally depraved and bent on dominating, subjugating, and humiliating the black race. They would rather take the northern Sudanese for what they claim to be-Arabs. The fact that these Arabs deny their visible black African genetic origins is all

the more reason to despise them as renegades. This argument offers not a redefinition of national identity to achieve unity, but a form of diversified coexistence based on the principle of live and let live.

An extension of the logic in the second alternative would lead to a third choice of policy. If, indeed, the differences between the North and the South are so wide and deep, there is every reason to believe that problems based on race, religion, culture, and ethnicity will remain and undermine a unified Sudan. However broad or limited the scope of a unified national framework, the same principles of identity that impede full unity and integration would operate to divide the country. The inevitable conclusion is that even a loose framework of unity may not be mutually accommodating enough to be sustainable. In that case, the only remaining option is to partition the country. Partition may indeed allow each side to consolidate its internal front. With the realization that friendly and cooperative relations are essential to regional security, economic growth, and prosperity, the two parts of the country may eventually begin to build new bridges and come back together on the basis of genuine need for cooperation and regional integration without the domination of one by the other.

The history of North-South confrontation clearly demonstrates that the resolution of the destructive impasse in the country depends on forging a national political identity by consensual means. Authoritarian coercion cannot produce a stable, enduring outcome, and spontaneous interactions between the respective northern and southern populations have not done so over several centuries. The forging of a political identity that will enable stable rule and economic development must be seen as a problem of policy.

The renowned Sudanese writer al-Tayeb Salah, a Nubian from the Northern region, has been concerned with the historical legacy of Northern identity. He sees his writings as a search for the Sudanese identity amid the complex remains of historical evolution. "The Sudan," he observed, meaning the North, "was Pharaonic, heathen, Christian and then it became Muslim. The collective, unconscious memory of these

people is the thing that I would like to explore. The main issue is the exploration of the identity. Who are we? We may claim that we are something, but sociologically or historically, we may be something else.”¹⁶ At the dawn of independence, northern Sudanese were asking themselves precisely that question in order to determine whether they were Arabs and should therefore join the Arab League,

or Africans and should therefore look southward to sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁷ Of course, for the southern Sudanese, the issue did not arise, since they never doubted their own identity as black Africans.

An even more critical aspect of the identity crisis than the one with which al-Tayeb and others are concerned emerges at the second level, where the contrasting identities of the South and the North are competing for the national identity. The South symbolizes the African identity while the North is seen as representing the Arab-Islamic identity, but with significant African and Afro-Arab elements. Which element is reflective of the Sudan — Africanism or Arabism? Mansour Khalid, a prominent scholar, diplomat, and politician, poses the question of identity with a view to exploring a common ground on which all Sudanese, northerners and southerners alike, can stand united.¹⁸ Khalid does not see the unity of the country on the basis of an exclusive Arab identity, but as a concept of Africa that embraces diversities: “The Sudan has often been called a ‘microcosm of Africa’ because of its diversity manifest in a wide range of areas. Its inhabitants may call themselves Arabs, or Africans or, indeed, Afro-Arabs or Arab-Africans; they profess a number of religions, including Islam and Christianity; they speak different languages and dialects and pursue a varied range of lifestyles, from the city dwellers to the nomadic tribes of the Sahara and the upper reaches of the Nile. All those diversities are evocative of the African continent.”¹⁹

In the abstract, most Sudanese, including northerners, agree with Khalid's formulation. When the concept is applied to the political, economic, cultural, and religious realities of nation building, however, the North-South dichotomy inevitably emerges. Even such a liberal as Mansour Khalid would be perceived as advocating a version of national identity that would be more open, but predominantly Arab, at least in its cultural and linguistic orientation.

The inability of northerners and southerners to agree on a common, inclusive identity has formed an important part of the conflict. In a speech to the Koka Dam meeting of the SPLM-SPLA and northern political forces in March 1986, John Garang, the leader of the SPLM-SPLA, said on the

issue of identity: "Our major problem is that Sudan has been looking and is still looking for its soul; for its true identity. Failing to find it, Sudanese take refuge in Arabism, failing this they find refuge in Islam as a uniting factor. Others get frustrated as they fail to see how they could become Arabs when their Creator thought

otherwise. And they take refuge in separation. In all this there is a lot of mystification and distortion to suit the various sectarian interests. ..."20 In the coded language of the North-South Sudanese political lexicon, Garang's words would be understood as advocating the Africanization of the country and, however embracing in the abstract, would be labeled as a southern perspective.

Objectively however, what both Khalid and Garang are saying is that the elements of Sudanese identity are varied and complex, that it is possible for an individual or a group to adopt alternative identities, and that the patterns of self-identification have tended to be divisive. The challenge is to find a common ground that looks at the composite realities of the country within a framework of the Sudan itself as a concept of unity in diversity.

Garang recommends that the Sudanese "need to throw away this sectarianism and look deep inside [their] country."21 But, as Martin Daly has observed, looking inside the country appears to reveal two different national visions, which are increasingly proving to be irreconcilable. "The civil war that has been under way since 1983, no less than that which lasted from 1955 to 1972, has as one of its principal causes fundamentally opposing views of what it means or should mean to be a Sudanese. ... Resolution of the conflict may therefore involve a major change in the social and political structure of the Sudan."22

What Daly seems to be saying is that since these two visions appear to be incompatible or irreconcilable, unless one side succeeds in imposing its will on the other, the country may have to accept partition. While Daly's prediction is supported by historical evidence, it is still possible to postulate alternative approaches aimed at redefining the national identity, not only to reflect the African-Arab realities of the country, but to be equitably uniting and mutually accommodating. The fact that there is a degree of parity in the power positions of the two competing identities makes the three alternative scenarios—redefining identity, accommodating the differences, or partitioning the country — all plausible options.

Of course, the Sudanese do not all recognize the existence of a crisis of identity. Some assert that the problem is the creation of the politicians or intellectuals. However, scholars and most informed Sudanese increasingly recognize the need for fostering a collective sense of nationhood, a national identity that would focus attention on being Sudanese before celebrating the external linkages with Arabism or Africans.

Robert Collins articulated the challenge of the search for a uniting label and content to national identity when, in an address to the Sudan Studies Association, he posed and answered the question: "What, then, is the Sudanese, this new man? He is neither Arab nor African; he is Sudanese in which the individuality of many ethnicities have been melted, to quote Crevecoeur, 'into a new race of men.' Belonging to two worlds but of neither ...an individual generous in spirit and in kind, possessed of a tolerance born of patience in a harsh land, confident in self with a pride in being, no matter how humble, and complete with the integrity which accompanies cavalier self-esteem."²³

Collins was clearly too generous in his abstract and poetic exaltation of the Sudanese; the identity he describes is an unsorted amalgam of fact, fiction, and aspiration that is still to be agreed upon as a cornerstone for nation building. Certainly the ingredients of this identity and their place in building the Sudanese nation remain pertinent but, at the practical level of implementation, acutely controversial. The controversy transcends semantics or labels of self-identification and strikes at the interests and aspirations of the people involved. Above all, it is a clash of identities in competition over power and resources, and it has generated violent conflict between mostly southern-based liberation movements and successive governments in Khartoum.

Although the division between the South and the North has been the principal source of disunity the official view of national identity as Arab and Islamic and its implications for participation and distribution eventually came to be challenged. Challenges came not only from scholars, but also from such visionary and charismatic southern leaders as William Deng Nhial, the cofounder of the SSLM, who was assassinated in 1968 after his electoral victory and at the peak of his popularity.²⁴ The challenge was more recently picked up by the SPLM-SPLA.

The North-South dichotomy has, however, remained the key to understanding the otherwise complicated racial, cultural, and religious configuration of the Sudan. As the late professor Muhammad Omar

Bashir observed, "While there is no small degree of diversity of people ... it is generally accepted that culturally the country is divided into two broad regions: the north and the south. ...Islam and Arabic have acted as unifying factors and contributed to the homogeneity of the north, whereas the south is a heterogeneous society."²⁵

A 1956 report by the special commission that investigated the southern disturbances of the previous year delineated the North-South dichotomy:

Firstly: ...there is very little in common between Northern and Southern Sudanese. Racially the North is Arab, the South is Negroid; Religiously the North is Muslim, the South is pagan; Linguistically the North speaks Arabic, the South some eighty different languages. This is apart from the geographical, historical, and cultural differences.

Secondly: ...for historical reasons the Southerners regard the Northern Sudanese as their traditional enemies.

Thirdly: the British administrative policy until 1947 was to let the Southern Sudanese "progress on African and Negroid lines" ...and by making use of the Closed Districts Order and the Permits to Trade Order, prevented the Sudanese from knowing each other ...and learning from each other.

Fourthly: ...for political, financial, geographical and economical reasons the Northern Sudan progressed quickly in every field (local Government, irrigation schemes, health, high education, industrial development), whilst the Southern Sudan lagged far behind.

Fifthly: all the above factors combined did not create in the Southern Sudanese a feeling of common citizenship with the Northern Sudanese, nor a feeling of nationalism or patriotism to the Sudan as a whole, and his loyalty remained, as it always had done, to his own tribe alone. It is only within the last year or so that the average Southerner is becoming politically conscious, but this political consciousness, as it is bound to be initially is regional and not national.²⁶

This special commission report identified the principal challenges to the state and to nation building that the identity issue poses for the Sudan. The cleavage resulting from this fundamental crisis of nationhood has been at the root of the chronic conflict that has afflicted the country since independence, has undermined successive governments, and remains the main obstacle to peace, unity, and stability. The gap dividing the people of the Sudan has both narrowed and widened at the same time. From a policy perspective, the complexity and the polarity of the Sudanese national character that is emerging is both an impediment to the evolution of a collective sense of nationhood and a political basis for

the evolution of a collective sense of nationhood and a political basis for breaking down the psychological barriers to a com-

mon Sudanese denominator. Indeed, there appears to be an increasing, perhaps ambivalent tendency to accept both the objective of unity and the reality of diversity. How these can be reconciled and made to function effectively is the challenge facing the leadership on both sides of the conflict.

Clearly, the attempt to assimilate the country into an Arab-Muslim model has not succeeded, at least not in the intended form. Many southerners have learned Arabic and are as fluent in the language as northerners. The number of Muslims in the South may also have increased. And yet sentiments that divide the North and the South along racial, ethnic, and nationalistic lines appear to have intensified, despite the vision of a new, unified Sudan postulated by the SPLM-SPLA.

Preservation of differences nearly always implies inequities; different but equal is a difficult equation to balance within the framework of a nation-state. The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement created conditions of relatively peaceful and harmonious interaction that moderated, perhaps even disguised, the inequities of the national power structure and process. The agreement neutralized resistance to assimilation and subtly strengthened the centripetal forces. To counter the trend, it became even more urgent for the South to understand the forces at work and to realize its own potential to contribute toward an equitable restructuring and reshaping of the Sudanese national character.²⁷ Instead, southerners seemed initially euphoric in their enjoyment of a regional autonomy that they increasingly found was empty of economic and political power. Southern politicians jealously competed for symbolic power positions and remained oblivious of or blind to their marginalization in the national decisionmaking system. By the time they became aware of what was going on, it was too late; Nimeiri had abrogated the Addis Ababa Agreement, divided the South into three regions to weaken it, and imposed Islamic law on the whole country by presidential decree.

Ironically, Nimeiri's unilateral abrogation of the agreement proved to be a mixed blessing in that it challenged the South to be more self-assertive in the search for equitable bases of nation building. So far, the search has

led to a further polarization of the country into Islamic fundamentalism in the North and an equally radical trend in the South, the two feeding on each other and presenting the country with almost irreconcilable ideological visions.

Depending on how the issues involved are addressed and resolved,

the Sudanese will have to choose from among a limited number of options. The ideal option, though perhaps the least feasible, would be to redefine and restructure the national identity to be more encompassing and equitably integrating. The next most desirable option would be to formulate a broad framework for coexistence within a loose federal or even confederal unity that could also foster peaceful interaction and a more integrated identity. Failure to accomplish one of these can only mean a clear-cut partition of the country. But the issue will not and cannot be left to the Sudanese alone to determine, for regional and global actors with diverse agendas are bound to intervene to influence the outcome. The chances of their success, however, will depend on how attuned they are to the domestic realities. And within the domestic context, success will depend on the degree of equity that is achieved among the competing identities.

There are two ways to restructure the national identity. One would be to remove the divisive elements from the public realm. This means that such identity factors as race and religion should not be allowed to influence in any way one's sense of national belonging or participation in public affairs. This is, in fact, encompassed in the usual constitutional or legal provisions guaranteeing fundamental human rights, freedoms, and civil liberties. The other way would be to redefine the national identity to reflect the shared elements — of race, culture, or ethnicity — and to guarantee full equality to these elements within a framework of political unity. Should these methods fail, only oppression, domination, and subjugation can preserve national unity, not consensus or democracy. This is not only undesirable but impractical in the long run.

At present the Sudan appears to be at a critical crossroads between Islamic fundamentalism or revivalism in the North and a modern concept of a secular, democratic, pluralistic state in the South. As a northern Islamist scholar recently noted, "What we are witnessing is the clash of two antagonistic cultural outlooks, both of which are experiencing a revival. The introduction of Western culture as a dynamic external factor, offering both a paradigm and material and cultural backing to the anti-Islamic forces, is a new development. Although not completely absent

from earlier phases of Islamic 'revival' ...the Western factor is important precisely because it is working in conjunction with well-developed internal forces. "28

To focus on these two extremes is not to underestimate the role and

the potential of the central forces of change, among them the professional associations, labor and trade unions, farmers' associations, and the intellectual opinion shapers. While these forces have been pivotal in changing unwanted regimes, however, they have so far not been a positive force for consensus building.

The dilemma for the Sudan is that none of the warring parties appears to have a decisive advantage in shaping the destiny of the nation. Experience since independence has shown that whenever the issues involved are to be determined democratically, the allies of traditionalism have triumphed against the centrist elements of transition but have failed to address the critical challenges of building a modern nation. And whenever military dictatorship has tried to impose its will on the nation, the democratic spirit of the centrist forces from the professional and trade union circles has eventually asserted itself and overthrown the military government through popular uprising. So far the overthrow of military dictatorship by the popular will has returned to power the more traditional elements. As a result, the nation has been going in a vicious cycle and may be losing the momentum for a popular uprising, since no viable alternatives are in sight. The decisive confrontation, therefore, appears to be between the Islamists in the North and the secularists, led by the South but including elements in the North.

A northern Islamist scholar, addressing the progress of Islam and Arabism among the northerners in the face of the increasingly self-assertive Africanism among the southerners, articulated the dilemmas for the country when he wrote, "The close association between Islam and Northern Sudanese nationalism would certainly rob Islam of an advantage ...[as] it remains beset by problems similar to those that limited the appeal of the SPLA's Africanism."²⁹ Likewise, "Northern Sudanese, who identify strongly with their Arab heritage, are in no danger of being seduced by Africanism. Far from being inclined to sing with Césaire 'Hurrah for those who never conquered anything,' their poets have long boasted about 'our many exploits in Spain which showed the Franks who they really were.' But, equally, Islamic ideology is by definition, unacceptable to non-Muslims. Its association with Arab

Northern self-assertion makes it even more unpalatable to
Southerners.³⁰

This appraisal, carried to its logical conclusion, supports the view that
there is no basis for national unity unless something most unex-

pected occurs. Such a thing can only be the exploration of a Sudanese common ground. If national unity is of overriding value, then the prospects for its realization will lie in a number of interactive factors: a profound sense of value attached by the Sudanese to their self-discovery as a people and a nation; the availability of regional and international supporters who believe in the strategic value of a united and collectively motivated Sudan, playing its traditional role as a regional moderator and bridge builder; and cooperation in exploring and exploiting the country's immense natural resources of oil, minerals, and vast agricultural land with ample water supply for the benefit of all Sudanese. If all that sounds utopian and unrealistic, then it is time to recognize that unity is not an end in itself, that the Sudan has failed to guarantee the minimum standards of what a state owes its citizens, that the people of the Sudan have suffered too much from the conflict for far too long, and that partition may be the only option to bring lasting peace to this beleaguered country.

PART 2 Evolution of Identities

Chapter 2 Northern Identity: Assimilation

Arabization and Islamization progressed in the North, whose racially stratified society deemed the Arab people and culture superior. The Arabs in the North were propped up by military conquest, supported by material wealth, and elevated in status by the universal image of Islam and Arab civilization. In contrast, the African Negro was considered inferior, an active or potential slave, the downtrodden of the earth. Many black Africans in the North converted to Islam because, by becoming Muslim, they became freemen and respectable members of the community. For many, the motivation to do so was irresistible. To the new members of the Arab identity, the sense that they had been promoted into a superior class was more than religious or cultural; it was a gift of birth and descent, assumed or even fabricated, and ultimately a belonging to the Arab race. Over the centuries, these elements evolved eclectically embracing indigenous customs and practices that were not easy to shed but retaining the emphasis on the Arab-Islamic umbrella as the uniting feature of the community and ultimately of the emerging nation-state. The stratification and the discrimination remained, however, and would continue to demean the non-Arabs and non-Muslims. This was particularly true in the southern part of the country, which remained dar al-harb, the land of war, the frontiers of continuing and God-ordained hostilities. An element of this attitude persists to this day.

The origins of this process can be traced to several thousand years before Christ, when the Egyptians and the Arabs began to expand southward, looking for slaves, gold, ivory, and revenue from taxation. Christianity entered the scene in the sixth century and was able to establish kingdoms that survived for a thousand years. But the intervention of Islam in the seventh century set in motion a process of gradual decline for Christianity. This decline culminated in the eventual overthrow of the Christian kingdoms in 1504 by an alliance of the Arabs and the Islamized kingdom of the Funj, whose origin remains

obscure. In due course, Islamization and Arabization gained hold in the North and eventually overshadowed the preexisting Sudanese and Christian elements.

The process by which the present Arab-Islamic identity in the North evolved is presented here in its historical progression, which reflects the thematic evolution through the phases of tradition to modernity. Arabization and Islamization were carried out in a context in which tradition was dominant, although its vision was broadened through the role of the Islamic Sufist leaders, who pragmatically welded pagan ways onto their version of the faith. This broadening also continued into the initial stages of the transitional phase, represented in the Turko-Egyptian rule of the Ottoman Empire (1821–85) and the Mahdist state that overthrew it in 1885. The modern phase came with the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, which consolidated the Sudanese nation-state within its present borders.

As noted at the outset, these phases overlap and coexist even as they signify a progression. The original tribal system has been coopted and maintained through the transitional processes of fostering a wider Islamic community while the transitional phase represented by those processes has been built upon and used by the modern state consolidated under the British. The forces of modernity inevitably fostered and unleashed by British rule, have extended the modernization process beyond colonialism and through the nationalist movement for independence. Indeed, in the perception of the postcolonial revolutionary forces in the North, the process of liberation and self-determination continues and is in part represented by several radical elements. These consist of the communists, now outdated, the Republican Brothers, a liberal Islamic movement now politically debilitated, and the current ruling party, the National Islamic Front (NIF), and its military ally, the Revolution for National Salvation.

ARABIZATION AND ISLAMIZATION

Although the Arabization of the northern Sudan was a gradual process, which was significantly reinforced and accelerated by Islam and is still

under way, it has its roots in ancient Sudanese history. The manner in which it was effected differs profoundly from the strategies that were introduced by Islamization. The argument is usually made that

Arabization and later Islamization were brought about by peaceful interaction and mutual integration. While this is probably true of the earlier process of Arabization, it is less true of the later pattern of Islamization, which was pursued through organized force and ruthless use of military power.

The earlier process was essentially an aspect of continuing contacts and interaction with Arab traders, in which the northern Sudan participated, however peripherally in the diffusion of civilizations, cultures, and economic relations. Arabs came from the world beyond, a world with the sophistication of the latest developments and commodities, which symbolized progress to the native Sudanese. Those early contacts and connections explain why the notion of Bilad al-Sudan, (Land of the Blacks, at times referred to as Kush), comprising the belt below the Sahara across the width of the continent, has prevailed for several thousand years. This ancient Sudan was not just the recipient of the benefits of progress from the outside world; it had a flourishing indigenous civilization that at times benefited its northern neighbors in a give-and-take process of mutual enhancement. As Lloyd Binagi has observed, "The northern Sudan has a long and rich civilization that pre-dates Pharaonic Egypt and the rise of Islam.... Nubia ... has had contact with every civilization that has appeared in Egypt: the Greeks ... the Romans, Arabs, Turks and British... . Indeed, what distinguishes the eastern Sudan from the rest of the large Sudanic belt is the country's total immersion into Arabism and the Arab world at large."¹

There is now a tendency in the modern Sudan for the whole country to glorify and identify with the history of the kingdoms and civilizations of Nubia, Kush, Funj, and all those legacies originating south of Egypt. Although this revisionist perspective on history is an understandable part of nation building, it tends to cloud the complexities, diversities, and variations of historical experiences encompassed by the country with the largest land mass on the African continent. The Sudan had large communities whose traditional experiences with external relations and influences were distinctly different from those of the northern groups. Sudanese are sensitive about seeing the history of the country in terms

of outside influences, which one author attributes to “a deep-seated prejudice, ... about the ability of the African continent to nurture an indigenous civilization... .”² Much of what has happened in the Sudan, however, particularly in the molding of iden-

tity symbols that are now tearing the country apart, is the result of interaction with outside actors.

As early as 3000 B.C. the pharaoh of the first Egyptian dynasty captured Wadi Halfa in the extreme north of the Sudan, enabling the Egyptians to settle farther and farther up the Nile and to integrate themselves with the indigenous population of Nubia, the most northerly region of the country. Although initially a province of Egypt, Nubia became strong enough to break away. In the eighth century B.C., Nubia even conquered Egypt and dominated the Sudanese-Egyptian portion of the Nile Valley.³ It was eventually defeated by the Assyrians in 663 B.C., and the Nubians were then forced to move to Merowe. Over a period of time, interaction between the Egyptians and the Nubians resulted in a racially mixed group, akin to the predynastic Egyptians. Indigenous identities have, however, withstood the test of time, and the Nubians, Arabized and Islamized as they are, continue to be torn between pride in their original Nubian heritage and identification with the wider Arab world, primarily through the Egyptian connection.

While the Nubians were receptive to Egyptian influence, the Beja in the eastern Sudan remained largely impervious and never exhibited “the same degree of Egyptian influence as that of their neighbors along the Nile.”⁴ To this day the Beja have retained much of their original identity which makes them barely distinguishable from their neighbors farther east in Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Arabization also occurred more directly through the influence of migrants from the Arabian peninsula, who settled among the people, adopted their language, intermarried with them, and, in due course, became almost indistinguishable from them. But the Arabs still enjoyed a privileged status because of their advanced skills in trade and agriculture and because of their wealth.

Calling this early process Arabization may be overstating the case for the Arabs. What appears to have occurred is that they were assimilated into the traditional Sudanese society with an obviously privileged status. This

clearly explains why despite the more vigorous process of Arabization and Islamization that accompanied the advent of Islam, these areas have continued to be delicately poised between their proud, sentimental attachment to their original identity and their pragmatic identification with the Arab culture and political worldview.

Despite the remoteness of the mainstream South from these developments, the northern groups that resulted from Arabization

were not free of Negroid southern characteristics, for their interaction with the northern territories “had undoubtedly affected the ... [northern] tribes... .”⁵ Furthermore, “the importation of slave women from the South, which has proceeded uninterruptedly for centuries, has lent a further measure of spurious homogeneity to all these Nubian peoples.”⁶

Islamization, as an instrument of Arabization, has had greater effect in molding the contemporary identity of the northern Sudan than did the original interaction with Arab traders. It has, in fact, overshadowed the layers of the civilizations that preceded it. The Islamic empire first took over Egypt and then, using it as a base, began to send expeditions into the Sudan. Sudanese resistance, though it inflicted heavy losses on the Arabs, ultimately could not withstand the Arabs' superior power.⁷ The Sudanese eventually sought peace, and the Arabs, unable to achieve decisive victory, accepted and concluded peace treaties, first with the Nubians in 651–52 A.D. and then with the Beja in 831 A.D.⁸ These treaties were founded on the superior military power of the Arabs and therefore gave the Arabs advantages over the Sudanese.

At the same time, since the indigenous rulers and institutions would have to safeguard the interests of the Arab-Muslim community in the Sudan, it was prudent for them to show a functional degree of respect for the Sudanese. It is also evident that both sides had suffered sufficiently from their hostilities to realize the gains of peace. The treaties were therefore meant to regulate relations between the two groups as independent though unequal national identities. They spearheaded Arab interests and opened up the Sudan to their influence. Arabs could move or settle freely in the areas covered by the treaties. Their commercial interests, religious freedom, and personal safety were all safeguarded.⁹ Apart from these remote but effective controls, the Muslim empire left the Sudanese independent, threatening action and occasionally reacting fiercely only if they violated the agreement. Once they had pledged to observe the agreements, the Sudanese were left to themselves.¹⁰

While the Sudanese occasionally clashed with the official Muslim forces, their relations with the Arab Muslims who settled among them continued

to be amicable. The attributes that had favored the earlier process of Arabization continued to operate in an atmosphere that was even more favorable and indeed elevating to the Arabs. Their occupation with trade and other commercial enterprises endowed them with

wealth.¹¹ And clearly their status was enhanced by their universalizing religion and the superior military power behind it. The age-old process of marrying into prominent families and taking advantage of the matrilineal system of succession continued to foster a mutually augmentative process of assimilation with an Arab-Islamic bias. In due course the descendants of Arab immigrants inherited positions of leadership, from which they fostered the patrilineal system, perpetuating the Arab-Muslim identity.¹²

By the fifteenth century the Arabs had spread into the interior, going as far south as Atbara and westward to Kordofan province. In 1504 the Islamized Funj kingdom farther south aligned itself with the Arabs and overthrew the Christian kingdoms, which had gradually been reduced and weakened. The Funj kingdom, though said to be obscure in origin, is generally believed to have been Black, but is referred to literally as “the Blue Sultanate,” al-Sultana al-Zerga, for, to the northern Sudanese, a freeman cannot be black, the color of the Negro, the actual or potential slave. With the fall of the Christian kingdoms, the Funj began to dominate the whole area, except Darfur in the far west, which was ruled by sultans who also claimed Arab descent, but who looked more indigenously African than Arab.

The autonomous nature of Arabization in the Sudan implies that conversion was to a significant degree a matter of choice within a framework of restrained intimidation. It is easy to see why blacks who were exposed to Arab power and domination were quick to embrace Islam and become Arabized, since doing so elevated them to a privileged status. It has been argued that there was indeed a coercive factor in the process and that “the earlier Sudanese identification with [Islam and] Arabism was nothing but a survival tactic by an overwhelmed people.”¹³ The result was that Arabization and Islamization led to the evolution of descent groups in the North bearing the names of their original Arab founders and sometimes associating themselves with the tribes of the dominant lineages in Arabia.¹⁴ These genealogies have been known to be traced with many jumps or lacunae back to Arabia, and in cases where the Sudanese lineage is politically or religiously prominent, back to

the Prophet Muhammad, his tribe, the Quraysh, his relatives, or his close associates.¹⁵

What makes this process part of the traditional phase is that despite the seemingly radical transformation of the indigenous identity, Islam and Arabism were promoted through local Sufi religious leaders who

were eclectic in their approach, so that the process gave both a uniquely Sudanese character.¹⁶ Muslim missionaries who came to the Sudan from Egypt, the Hijaz in Arabia, and the Maghreb in northwest Africa in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries brought with them the Sufi orders or *turuq* (singular *tariqa*). By the early 1800s these had become firmly established in the country, having the most profound and pervasive form of religious and political influence. Named after the simple woolen clothing, *suf*, worn by traveling holy men, Sufism was a reaction to the more abstract orthodox Islam of the Ulema class (Islamic scholars), which made the religion seem distant from the lives of the ordinary people. Sufism rested on the belief that a holy man could experience God personally and have God's blessing, *baraka*, bestowed on him. He could then pass this blessing on to his descendants. Certain rituals, such as chants of praise to God and his prophets, could induce individualized experiences with God and the ancestral spirits to reinforce spirituality and holiness. Because Sufism gave Islam a living meaning that was closer to the traditional African religious beliefs and practices, it became localized and institutionalized, even though it continued to be based on the teachings of prominent orders with origins outside the Sudan. Sufism thus came to fill an important human need for guidance through paths that helped individuals to experience God and the spiritual world in a personal way akin to that of paganism.

Among the first two Sufi orders to be established in the Sudan were the Qadiriyya and the Shadhiliyya. The Qadiriyya was introduced into the Sudan from Baghdad in the middle of the sixteenth century. This order continues to have a strong following in the central Gezira region of the Sudan. The Shadhiliyya order is generally believed to have been introduced into the country from the Maghreb in 1445. Today it has a following among the tribes residing along the Red Sea coast and is also found in other parts of the country.

Of greater historical importance have been two other Sufi orders, the Khatimiyya and the Samaniyya, both of which have played major roles in modern Sudanese politics. The Khatimiyya, or Mirghani order, was founded in the Sudan by Muhammad Osman al-Mirghani (1793–1853),

who eventually modified the traditions of the order and emphasized the sanctity of his own family's leadership. His grandson, Muhammad Osman Taj al-Sirr, was responsible for mobilizing the order's followers to support the Turko-Egyptian regime and to oppose actively the revolutionary movement of Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi, thus setting the

stage for the political rivalry between these two families, which has lasted to the present.

The Samaniyya was introduced into the Sudan around 1800 and is most strongly represented today along both banks of the White Nile and in the agriculturally rich Gezira region. It is particularly significant for the influential Mahdi family which it originally counted among its adherents. The spiritual and political leader Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi became an ardent follower of the Samaniyya order before declaring his revolution in 1881 against foreign authority. Although today the Mahdi family has developed an autonomous following, it continues to find its doctrinal inspiration in Samaniyya teachings.

Sufist orders were thus set up to perpetuate the teachings and rules of the founding fathers or sheikhs. "Those tariqas expanded in influence, partly because Islam was perceived by the rising mercantile classes as an instrument for use against the restrictive traditional feudal structure, and, somewhat paradoxically because of the acquiescence, or even support, of an increasingly Islamicized sultanate and meks (princes)."¹⁷

Behaving in a fashion quite similar to the practices of traditional African religions, these holy men became known for their religious devotion and power to perform miracles, while many of their successors became spiritual and political guardians of the Funj kings and princes. The common people sought them out to intercede with God and with their rulers. Indeed, they became a means by which the opinion of the masses could be expressed. In their lifetime, they enjoyed the favor of the royalty and the adoration of the masses; after their death they continued to intercede with God, and their tombs became places of pilgrimage and worship.¹⁸ The outcome of the process was the gradual formation of the Sudanese version of Islam and its relationship to politics, society, and the masses. Although the process was essentially elitist and stratificational, the outcome was a broad-based model of kinship traceable through pedigree. Muhammad Ibrahim al-Shoush, a Sudanese scholar of Islamic studies, stresses the uniqueness of the result, understating the importance of outside influence in order to emphasize the internal

dynamics:

The isolation of the Sudan from foreign influences and the absence of virtually any intellectual or cultural activities and modern schools up to the beginning of this century gave the Sudan the

unique opportunity to develop its character and have its own religious, social and linguistic traditions peculiar to it, and to a great extent divorced from other developments in the Arab world.

Foremost amongst the characteristics and one of far-reaching consequences in the intellectual life of the Sudan was the production of its own blend of religion... . This, slowly acquired, naturally mixed with the local customs, practices and traditions, some of which go back to pagan and Christian periods.¹⁹

According to the administrator-scholar K. D. D. Henderson, however, the effect of the Sufi orders on the Muslim community has been divisive. The "Sufi brotherhood ... set the pattern of Islamic life in the Sudan. Whether or not it be true as some modern Arab theologians assert, that the decline in Muslim power and culture was due to the fissiparous influence of the rival orders of Sufism, they have certainly exercised a divisive influence in the Sudan."²⁰ Nevertheless, the element of tolerance of other religious practices that they presented was a constructive contribution, from which Muslim leaders today have much to learn.

The influence of popular Sufist Islam (over the orthodox and fundamentalist variety) goes a long way toward explaining the very slow growth of the Muslim Brothers movement between the 1940s and the 1960s. During this period of western colonial penetration, people were more attracted to the different Sufist orders than to fundamentalist-inspired groups.

This is not to say, however, that orthodox Islam had no institutional foundation in the Sudan. The Turko-Egyptian conquest of the country beginning in 1820-21 brought with it the shari'a, which previously had a minor role in Sudanese life. Although the people nominally adhered to Islamic jurisprudence (madhhab), tribal and popular Islamic custom was in most respects the effective law. The Egyptian administration established a formal hierarchy of religious courts designed to administer shari'a. The Egyptians also built a number of mosques and facilitated the education of a significant number of Sudanese Ulema, men learned in

the scriptures.

Thus the traditional and more indigenous Muslim leadership of the Sufi orders was confronted with a rival group, more alien in outlook and closely associated with an occupying foreign power. This continuing source of tension contributed significantly to the development and

A new social order, in which inequities were moderated, began to evolve on the bases of the old. The power of scriptural knowledge and spiritual enlightenment became a basis for acquiring wealth and social status. These values in turn, by imposing their own obligations of moral responsibility toward the needy on the part of the more privileged, bridged or ameliorated the economic gap. Sudanese Islam accommodated pre-Islamic spiritual practices and began to develop in a manner that linked the leadership with the grass roots. And yet the leaders remained worlds apart in many other ways; in particular, the orthodox concept of Islam espoused by the Ulema contrasted with the eclectic religion of the masses, and the local Sufist leaders acted as the intermediaries.

This process of collaboration with the local religious leaders to inspire the following of loyal masses was the beginning of the transitional phase of identity formation in the North. At this juncture, Sufist sectarian leadership began to play a crucial role in the political evolution of the Sudan and in the religious politicization of national identity.

The popular view of the North as uniformly Arabized and Islamized is both factually incorrect and politically misleading. Some areas accepted Arabization to a greater degree than others, and this has been well documented. For instance, the Fur in the far west have remained more negroid in feature and culture than other northerners.²² The Nuba of Kordofan in the midwest have hardly been touched, and those

that have been affected have retained their pre-Islamic culture to a greater extent than other peoples.²³ The Nubians of the north have also retained their language separately from, though influenced by Arabic. The same is true of the Beja tribes in the east.²⁴ That the North has maintained its previous group identities underscores the way Islamization and Arabization built on the preexisting system. It has indeed been widely observed that Islam has always advanced itself along indigenous lines.²⁵ Rather than obliterate animist ideas and institutions, it cloaked them with outward symbols of Islam. Whereas Christian conversion involves intensive religious instruction as a prerequisite to baptism, Islam requires only the recital of the words, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."²⁶

There came a point in this process when Islamic values and institutions prevailed over preexisting concepts and practices, so that the latter merely enhanced the former.²⁷ Such is the stage Jack Mendelsohn had in mind when he said that the northern Sudanese "exercised their genius for assimilation by molding the religion of the Prophet to their own tastes rather than to the likes of the theologians." "They sang in it, danced in it, ... paganized it a good deal, but always kept the vivid reality of its inherent unity under the rule of one God."²⁸ By recognizing and building on the traditional order, Islam became identified with the local community and rapidly ceased to be regarded as alien. Today, a glance at the northern Sudan shows that "Islam ... has so filled the lives of its inhabitants and acquired such tenacious hold that it renders them impervious to other religious influences."²⁹

Nevertheless, it is critically important to distinguish this local version from orthodox Islam. Traditional African patterns, which Sudanese Muslims built on, upheld the relationship of religion and the totality of the social order. In traditional Africa, religious beliefs included "metaphysics, a cosmology, and a moral and political theory. The language of politics was at the same time the language of religion."³⁰ However, because it followed the autonomous structure of the lineage system, it was tolerant of diversity of belief. Orthodox Muslims also regard politics as an unseverable ingredient of Islamic order. This is why "no Muslim

Government would separate the secular from the religious side of life.”³¹ So strong is this fusion between the secular and the religious in the northern culture that it survived the secular forces of European colonial administration. Sufist Islam is closer to the traditional African concept, but it is less tolerant of diversity than the traditional system, while orthodox Islam tends to be centralized and is more

rigidly authoritarian. The politicization of Islam has, however, tended toward favoring orthodoxy over the Sufist tolerance in the Islamic doctrine.

The eclectic manner in which Arabization and Islamization built on the preexisting values and the institutions of the lineage system should not obscure the racial, cultural, and religious stratification in the composite identity of Sudanese Arabism and Islam, and the fluidity of “passing” from one to another, which underlay the process. That the perspectives involved clearly represented a sense of promotion or elevation into a superior status is still reflected in the contemporary attitudes of the Arab-Muslim North. As Sandra Hale has observed of the Ja'aliyin, “who incorporate the Arabized riverain dwellers and who with the Nubians form the dominant ‘core culture’ of the country, in all cases these people use folk ideologies in tracing their ancestry back to the early Arab Muslims, even to the Prophet himself. Noble birth is the distinctive feature which Sudanese Arabs hold up to those other Muslim groups not their own social equals.”³²

The identification of the North with Islam and Arab culture is not simply an outcome of early encounters with Arabs and Muslims, but also the result of subsequent developments starting with the intervention of the Turko-Egyptian regime.

OTTOMAN RULE

The Turko-Egyptian rule of the Ottoman Empire, which began in 1821 and continued until 1885, was ideologically and politically Islamic. Although it could not extend effective control over the South, except for a flourishing trade in slaves and a succession of unsuccessful pacification expeditions, its policies in the North reinforced the Arab-Islamic identity and therefore the South-North dichotomy. However, the Muslim North resented the Turko-Egyptian administration as corrupt, oppressive, and alien. Despite its Islamic cloak, the administration was characterized as a government of infidels. As a result Islam became, ironically a tool of national unity and a moral weapon for fighting the Turko-Egyptian administration, which was claiming to rule in the name of Islam. Arabism

was perceived as a necessary ingredient of Islam and an integral part of Sudanese Arab-Islamic identity.

Unlike the Arabs, the Turko-Egyptians were from the start an impe-

rial power. Muhammad Ali Pasha, an Albanian and the representative of the Ottoman Empire in Egypt, invaded Sudan with clear objectives. Pursuing his enemies, the Memeluks, who had fled into the Sudan, was one. He was also interested in gold, ivory, and other sources of revenue. His most vehemently expressed objective was to recruit Negroes as slave soldiers for the Egyptian army. He later wrote to his representative in the Sudan, "You are aware that the end of all our efforts and this expense is to procure Negroes. Please show zeal in carrying out our wishes in this capital matter."³³

An army of non-Arabs, largely Albanians and Turks, marched into the Sudan under the leadership of Ismail, Muhammad Ali's son, who was too superior in arms to be stopped, despite the strong resistance of the Sudanese. His forces overthrew the Funj sultans and established rule, spreading from area to area until they were able to conquer and control most of the North. But it was not until the 1870s that the southern provinces and Darfur province in the west were occupied. Even then, southern occupation was only partial.

The Turko-Egyptian administration maintained and used the tribal system, but chiefs became puppets of centralized control, and only when a chief had an exceptional character did he maintain his respect and influence within the tribe. "The Sudanese deeply regretted the loss of their tribal independence to an unpopular, alien rule which at best was unremitting and exacting in its demands."³⁴

The government's main source of wealth from the Sudan, taxation, generated discontent and resentment. "To the Sudanese the taxes were not only hateful by tradition but more than abominable when the revenues were not repaid in social services but sent to Egypt or pocketed by the Egyptian officials who viewed their corruption as just compensation for their unpleasant exile in the Sudan."³⁵

Until the Turko-Egyptian conquest, there was no truly orthodox, universally recognized religious authority in the country. Islam in the Sudan was perceived very differently by different people. Since the

Justification of the Turko-Egyptian conquest had been to claim the Sudan for the Ottoman ruler of the Muslim world, the new regime was committed to orthodoxy, or Islamic law, in the place of tribal law and custom. To the Sudanese, however, the regime was imposing a foreign law. The Sudanese thought of their own law and custom as Islamic even though it was the result of fusion between pre-Islamic traditional law and Islamic principles. As Oliver Farran observed, although the Muslim tribes of the North assumed that they adhered to shari'a or

Islamic law, what is in fact administered by their native judges is Mohammedan law as modified by custom.³⁶ A. N. Anderson also noted that "Islamic law has never fully ousted the indigenous law, but either co-exists with it as a separate and distinct system, each being applied in suitable circumstances, or else has fused with it into an amalgam that may be termed 'Islamic law' or 'native law and custom' according to taste or local practice."³⁷

The eclectic nature of Sufist Islam in the Sudan gave the local version a potency that is highly fervent in its religiosity. Sudanese Muslims, far from seeing themselves as a lesser breed of Muslims, indeed viewed themselves as better adherents of Islam than the Turko-Egyptian government, which they judged as decadent and whose Islam they hardly recognized. The "low morality of Egyptian officials, when judged by the puritanical standards of primitive Islam ... caused genuine feelings of religious revulsion and contempt among the Sudanese."³⁸

This perhaps explains why the Turko-Egyptian administration eventually turned to the Sufi leadership, which made sectarianism blossom despite the mutual antipathy of the two approaches to Islam and the initial effort of the centralized orthodox regime to undermine the power of the Sufi orders. This process began in the Funj and Fur Sultanates, but the transitional phase bloomed under Turko-Egyptian rule.³⁹ And yet, the process had to bridge tradition and transition. The administration concluded that it simply could not rule the country and in particular the remote areas without the support and cooperation of these local religious leaders. To remedy this crisis of legitimacy they decided to patronize certain Sufi orders. The Khatimiyya benefited most from this patronage. But not even these efforts at coopting the Sufi leaders could redeem the administrations lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Perhaps the principal point of conflict between the northerners and the Turkish rule was the government's attempts to suppress slavery.⁴⁰ As noted earlier, slave raiding was at the heart of Muhammad Ali's invasion of the Sudan. During the period of Khedive Ismail (1863–79), pressure from the British government resulted in efforts to suppress the slave raids. These efforts met with minimal success and sometimes with dismal failure.

The Turko-Egyptian administration in the Sudan was a good example of a rapacious penetration aimed at a one-sided benefit for the government without any return in protection, services, and development activities. The difficulty in suppressing the slave trade was partly due to the government's continued heavy taxation of the Sudanese.

This intensified the need for slaves. To the northern slavers, it was illogical that taxation, which they considered unjustified, should be imposed on them while their main source of income was outlawed. Slavery for the Arabs, Richard Hill observed, is a “legitimate and honourable source of profit, and all efforts at its suppression are viewed as an unjust and unreasonable interference with a custom sanctioned by the Koran, and with a time-honoured privilege.”⁴¹

These factors led to a series of rebellions that the government was at first able to crush but that only provided fertile ground for further attempts. The crumbling economy of Egypt, which had prompted the British occupation of that country in 1882, the low morale of the ill-paid Egyptian army in the Sudan, and the bitter resentment by the Sudanese of the army all made the Mahdist revolution a popular national movement, which united the whole of the northern Sudan and even extended its influence into the South.

THE MAHDIST STATE

In 1881 the nationalist leader Muhammad Ahmed, who soon became known as al-Mahdi, the Islamic Messiah, mobilized the Sudanese people against the Turks, meeting with spontaneous, nationwide support that initially cut across the South-North divisions. Muslim masses believe that at the end of time a man of the family of the Prophet will manifest himself to confirm the faith and proclaim justice. Muhammad Ahmed became convinced that he was indeed the awaited Messiah, and the Sudanese masses came to accept the Mahdi as the one who would establish the Islamic kingdom over all kingdoms. Armed with only spears and swords, the Mahdists won battle after battle, becoming increasingly zealous and confident in the process, until they succeeded miraculously in overthrowing the regime in 1885. Charles Gordon, the British general and hero of the war with China, who was then governor in the Turko-Egyptian administration, was killed, Khartoum fell, and Sudan became independent.⁴²

Although most northern intellectuals generally view Muhammad Ahmed al-Mahdi as the father of Sudanese nationalism, the Mahdi did not have

Sudanese nationalism as his motivation and objective. He advanced the idea of a unified nation by rallying anti-Turkish support.

Because the Mahdi was himself hostile to the leadership of the Sufist orders, he also labored to undermine their political and religious in-

fluence and therefore to push the process of broadening identity along the Islamic path. The Mahdi's success in this regard was countered by the resistance of the Khatimiyya sect, the most important order threatened by his Islamic reform. This created a new division among the orders involving larger camps.⁴³

The Mahdi's principal source of support against the Turko-Egyptian government was the slave-raiding militant Arab Baggara tribes of southern Kordofan and Darfur, who were vehemently antagonized by the government's antislavery campaign in response to the pressures from Europe. In contrast, the Mahdist revolution promised them the restoration of slavery. The Beja tribes also formed a reluctant alliance with the Mahdist movement (Mahdiyya), largely because of the antagonism the leaders of both groups felt toward the Khatimiyya order. "Such a variety of motivations almost inevitably produced a degree of fragmentation even within the Mahdiyya, probably the most unitary institution of Sudanese pre-colonial history, something reflected in the structure of the Mahdist army different factions fighting under different flags, each division commanded by its own caliph."⁴⁴

The Mahdi did not live long enough either to reap the fruits of his miraculous victory or to be fully accountable for the ultimate cost of the revolution to the nation throughout its sixteen-year duration. His successor, Khalifa Abdullahi, from the Taishi tribe of Baggara Arabs, continued the holy mission, applying Islamic law in its literal sense and spreading the divinely inspired word vigorously.⁴⁵ The objective was to bring the whole world into Islam. Among the many rulers with whom the Khalifa communicated and asked to submit or face war was Queen Victoria, to whom he offered marriage.⁴⁶

The Mahdiyya, both in its initial campaigns and in what happened during the Mahdist state, was an extremely costly adventure. The breakdown of law and order; famine due to drought, war, and lack of state capacity to meet the emergency; and the general Hobbesian state of affairs that prevailed throughout the country would make the crises in Somalia and Bosnia look mild by comparison. It was a period during which, in the local

terminology, “the world was spoiled.” Rudolph Slatin, an official of the Turko-Egyptian administration who was captured by the Mahdists, spent years in captivity converted to Islam in order to survive, later escaped, and subsequently returned to play an important role in the Anglo-Egyptian condominium, left a graphic description of the situation:

Those were terrible months at the close of 1889; the people had become so thin that they scarcely resembled human beings — they were veritably but skin and bone. These poor wretches would eat anything, no matter how disgusting — skins of animals which had long since dried and become decayed were roasted and eaten; the strips of leather which form the angareb (native bedstead) were cut off, boiled, and made into soup. Those who had any strength left went out and robbed; like hawks they pounced down on the bakers and butchers, and cared nothing for the blows of the kurbash which invariably fell on their attenuated backs.

Several sold their own children, both boys and girls, pretending they were their slaves; this they did not to obtain money, but simply to save their lives; and when this year of misery was over some parents bought them back again at even higher prices. The dead lay in the streets in hundreds; and none could be found to bury them... . Every day the waters of the Blue and White Niles swept past Omdurman, carrying along hundreds of bodies of the wretched peasantry who had died along the banks — a terrible proof of the awful condition of the country.⁴⁷

It is estimated that the population of Sudan fell from around 7 million before the Mahdist revolt to somewhere between 2 and 3 million after the fall of the Mahdist state.⁴⁸ Whatever the human cost, the indisputable fact is that Mahdism had a contradictory effect on the country. On the one hand, it provided the nation with a common vision against foreign rule and offered the prospect of independence; on the other hand, it generated internal divisions, intertribal warfare, and a general turmoil from which the country suffered much and has never fully recovered.

The Mahdiyya thus represents both progress toward the unity of the nation and an acute disruption that was extremely divisive even among the Muslim communities of the North. This was yet another step in the transitional process away from tradition. More than any other previous religious movement in the country, the Mahdiyya embroiled Sudan, the North in particular, in an Islamic struggle between conservatism and radicalism, which continues to have consequences in the present day.

The demise of the Mandist state could not have been avoided in the face of the superior Anglo-Egyptian force that destroyed it in 1898, but

there is no doubt that the debilitating effect of the Khalifa's rule facilitated its doom. And in view of the devastations and disintegration of the social order during the Mahdiyya, it is understandable that the first task and indeed the continued preoccupation of the British administration was to extend the range of law and order, and bring security to a worn and exhausted land.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, the Islamic agenda that the Mahdist state had imposed on the identity of the nascent Sudanese nation could no longer be ignored, even, perhaps especially by the Christian rulers who overthrew the theocratic state.

THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN CONDOMINIUM

A host of factors led to the reconquest of the Sudan by the joint Anglo-Egyptian army under the command of H. H. Kitchener in 1898. The British were initially unwilling to involve themselves in the Sudan and were content with improving the economic situation in Egypt, which they had occupied in 1882, a year after the Mahdist revolt began. They would not have agreed to the reconquest had they not wanted to stop the French from advancing up the Nile to occupy the Sudan and annex it to their empire. French control of the upper part of the Nile Valley would have endangered the interests of Egypt and therefore of Britain.⁵⁰

The Anglo-Egyptian forces reconquered the Sudan with the use and demonstration of their superior military might, which, for the British, made the country in the words of a southern Sudanese commentator, "a place where one could easily become a hero. Kitchener became an international soldier after his cheap victory over spearmen at Karari in 1898."⁵¹

The reconquest, although it cost more than 10,000 Sudanese lives and imposed a colonial status on the country, brought relief to the peoples of both the North and the South. The condominium rule, as it became known, was unique in colonial history. A government headed by a British governor-general was to be established, not under the colonial office, but under the advisory jurisdiction of the foreign offices of the condominium powers, Britain and Egypt. No settlers were to be allowed in the Sudan, nor were there to be any laws of capitulation with privileges due to the

Europeans or Egyptians on account of victory, race, or nationality. An elite civil service was to be recruited from

the best British universities, mostly Oxford and Cambridge. Sudan political service was to be a distinguished club comprising — as Lord Cromer, the British consul-general in Cairo, who was the effective ruler of Egypt and the Sudan, unquestionably the architect of the system, stipulated — “active young men, endowed with good health, of high character and fair abilities: not the mediocre by-products of the race, but the flower of those turned out from our schools and colleges.”⁵²

Although it is widely assumed that the victory of the condominium forces decisively established an unchallenged Anglo-Egyptian domination of the country, the truth is that the new government continued to experience considerable opposition throughout the country. Some argue that the Anglo-Egyptian administration never experienced full tranquility throughout its fifty-eight-year rule of the country.⁵³

In the North, opposition to the new government took the form of a neo-Mahdist religious resistance based on the cult of Nabi Eisa, “Prophet Jesus Christ,” who, according to local beliefs was expected to follow the Mahdi and save the Muslim community from its enemies. It should be recalled in this context that the Muslims believe that Jesus Christ is a prophet, not the son of God, and that he will return at the end of time in the name of Islam to right the wrongs of this world in preparation for the next. Many movements sprang up in the North appealing “to tribal discontents by preaching that after the defeat of the Mahdi, Jesus Christ would descend from heaven and lead the ... faithful against the anti-Christ with whom the British were identified, and so bring in the Muslim millennium.”⁵⁴ Although the belief in Christ is Islamic, the very notion of a Jesus Christ rising to redeem the Islamic world indicated both the eclectic nature of Islam in Sudan, fusing Christianity with Islam in a living way, and the personalized tradition of Sufist Islam, with its belief in the divinity of holy men able to intercede between the world of the living and that of deities, God, and ancestral spirits.

The first manifestation of neo-Mahdism occurred in Omdurman in 1905 and involved a close relative of the Mahdi, Ali Abd al-Karim. When he and nine of his followers were arrested and questioned, they declared

their belief in the coming of Nabi Eisa “to save the Sudan and the Islamic world.”⁵⁵ A commission consisting mostly of Sudanese religious leaders and an Egyptian Muslim judge was set up to consider whether the doctrine propagated by Ali Abd al-Karim was in conformity with Islam and, if not, what measures should be taken to check

the movement. The commission found the teachings of Ali Abd al-Karim to be contrary to the Islamic doctrines and his presence “harmful to the Mohamedan religion.”⁵⁶ The commission therefore recommended that he and his followers be banished “to prevent the evil effects which may happen through them.”⁵⁷ Accordingly Ali Abd al-Karim and twenty-five others were banished to Wadi Halfa in the far north, where Karim was chained and detained in prison until his death. The government declared that “the same punishment will fall on any person or persons who try to act contrary to the honourable Mohammedan religion.”⁵⁸ This, however, did not stop many more neo-Mahdists and prophets from springing up in different parts of the country, although their destiny was invariably death by hanging. The last was Muhammad al-Sayid Hamid, a nephew of the Mahdi, who in May 1919 declared himself Nabi Eisa and was soon arrested and hanged.⁵⁹

Apart from these religiously inspired movements, Darfur remained defiantly independent until 1916, when it was decisively defeated and subdued. The Nuba also wanted to be left alone and resisted the new government on those grounds.

Alongside suppressing these resistance movements, the administration tried to establish its legitimacy by demonstrating sensitivity to the local religious values and institutions. Concerned that the mistakes of the Turko-Egyptian administration should not be repeated, the British were particularly motivated to recognize and respect the Arab-Islamic identity of the North. They “decided that the country being Muslim, its Government must be regarded as Muslim.”⁶⁰ Friday instead of Sunday was recognized as the official day of rest.

Although Christian missionaries were licensed and encouraged to play a “civilizing” role in the South, the government excluded them from the North. Permission was later given for their activities in a few towns where there were European or Middle-Eastern Christians. While they were not to proselytize Muslims, they were allowed to offer educational and health services to them. Lord Cromer, explaining the motive of the policy argued that: “In the Northern portion of the Sudan ... it would not for the present,

be possible, without incurring great danger, to adopt so liberal and tolerant a policy as that pursued in Egypt... . If free scope were allowed to missionary enterprise, it would not only be wholly unproductive of result, but would also create a feeling of resentment, culminating possibly in actual disturbance,

which, far from advancing would almost certainly throw back that work of civilization, which all connected with the country whether or not connected with missionary enterprise, have so much at heart.”⁶¹

In a speech delivered to a northern audience in 1914, Sir Reginald Wingate, the governor-general, expressed his government's policy as one of positive encouragement of Islam. “God is my witness,” he declared, “we have brought the Holy Places within a few days' journey of Khartoum. We have subsidized and assisted the men of religion. We have built and given assistance for the building of new mosques all over the country. Finally the Kadis [Muslim judges] and others have received a free and thorough education in the Koran and in the tenets of the Mohammedan religion.”⁶²

The ambivalent attitude of respect by the “infidel” rulers for their Muslim subjects posed something of a dilemma with respect to the legal system. On the one hand, they “found that no system of justice worthy of the name existed in the country”⁶³ On the other hand, they realized that “no Muslim Government would separate the secular from the religious side of life.”⁶⁴

The resulting system was a compromise. Both criminal and civil jurisdictions adapted codes based on English law to suit the Sudanese conditions.⁶⁵ But for personal matters such as “succession, wills, legacies, gifts, marriage, divorce, family relations, or the constitution of Wakfs (Muslim trust),” the Civil Justice Ordinance provided that “civil courts shall not be competent to decide in a suit to which all parties are Mohammedans, except with the consent of all the parties.” Such matters appropriately fell under the jurisdiction of shari'a (Islamic) courts and were governed by shari'a law. In the tribal communities of the North, where customary law was interwoven with Muslim law, local courts were established to administer their law.

With respect to education, the British policy, in keeping with the Islamic approach against the separation of religion and state, was that “the educational system ... should be based on Islam.”⁶⁶ In state schools,

Islam was taught as part of the curriculum. Sudanese-owned private schools either were mainly for the teaching of Islam, or Islamic instruction formed an essential part of their program.

Through this sensitivity and dedication to service, the British fostered among the Sudanese a degree of legitimacy for a regime that was alien and, being also Christian, should have been fundamentally unpalatable to a Muslim community. In reality, through their policies

and their power position, the British were able in part to reshape the perception of the Sudanese, not to move them away from their Arab-Islamic identity, but to make them more accepting or tolerant of the differences. While respecting Islam, the British gradually instilled in the northerners a recognition of the separation of religion and the state.

This may explain why the Muslim North accepted and even developed a profound appreciation and respect for the Christian rulers. And yet, while the British were relatively successful in removing such issues of identity as race, culture, and religion in their own relations with the Sudanese, they allowed and even encouraged them as divisive factors, not only between North and South, but also among the various religious and ethnic factions in the North and between the urban and rural communities. The two leading patron families of the major political parties — the Mahdi family, which patronizes the Umma, and the Mirghani family, which patronizes the rival Democratic Unionist party (DUP) — were the beneficiaries of the religious evolution of Sufism, which Muhammad Ahmed al-Mahdi tried to destroy but which instead coopted his descendants. With a superstitious zeal that is un-Islamic by orthodox criteria, the unsophisticated followers of these spiritual leaders see them as divine, endowed with supernatural powers to bless, curse, and destroy in a worldly context. As already explained, Sufist Islam is as worldly as traditional African religious beliefs and practices. It is also more tolerant of diversity in religious expression than the centralized orthodox Islam, which has gradually been undermining the sectarian Sufist leaders in the Sudan.

The gradual decline of sectarian leadership in the modern context is partly the result of its grass-roots popularity, which the British rulers eventually recognized and used toward their own political ends. At first, the British feared and repressed the memory of the Mahdi. They closely watched the development of the Mahdi's son, Abd al-Rahman, who was born after his father's death. The boy grew up as a modest, ordinary member of his local community unnoticed beyond his narrow confines. At the same time the Anglo-Egyptian condominium powers, especially Egypt, favored Sheikh Ali al-Mirghani, whose sect had originally opposed

the Mahdiyya. Mirghani's influence continued to be enhanced by the material rewards he received through his Egyptian connection.

When the British saw the rising tide of secular nationalism among the educated youth, who at first looked to the Fabian socialists for a

progressive model of political and economic development but increasingly shifted to Egyptian nationalism for strategic guidance and cooperation, they decided to turn to the sectarian leaders, and especially the anti-Egyptian Mahdists, as political allies. Through allocation of land and vast loans for capital investments, the Mahdi's family gained control of an enormous economic base. Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi's status was dramatically transformed. Because of the rivalry between the two ruling powers and the traditional animosity between the Mahdi family and Egypt, Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi grew closer to the British as both benefactors and political allies, while Ali al-Mirghani continued his alliance with Egypt.

The two families had traditional strongholds, the Mahdi in the western regions and the North and the Mirghani in the East, with the central regions split between them. Popular support for these families, albeit very ambivalent at times, grew rapidly with official recognition and indeed promotion.

The educated class in the meantime became divided between the radicals, who would have nothing to do with the sectarian leaders, and the pragmatists, who wanted to build on sectarian popular support for the nationalist cause. The pragmatists prevailed, becoming the effective modern forces in the political development under the guidance and patronage of the two rival Sufist leaders. This was the genesis of the two original political parties, the Umma party, founded and championed by the Mahdi family, and the Ashigga (literally, Sibling Brothers), later National Unionist party (NUP), which evolved through various forms, the latest being the Democratic Unionist party, all supported by the Mirghani family. Apart from their division behind these leaders, the only difference between the two political parties was a tactical one, with the Umma party aiming at full independence and the Ashigga seeking some form of unity with Egypt. This later turned out to be a tactical ploy for ensuring Egyptian support, which made it possible for the country to achieve independence under the NUP.

The Communist party emerged as the first radical group to oppose these

sectarian parties. The fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood was formed primarily to oppose the Communist party. In due course, the internal rivalries within the Brotherhood led to its split between the more idealistic, spiritually motivated wing, and the more pragmatic, politically driven faction. The pragmatists, led by Hassan al-Turabi, eventually triumphed over the idealists.

Indeed, the politicization of religion was an aspect of the otherwise secular British administration. But while the British were in charge, they kept a lid on the situation, offered a moderating and pacifying third-party role, and saw to it that differences and rivalries did not explode into violence. Once they left the scene, things fell apart.

Several factors account for this. One is the degree to which the nationalist movement for independence was narrow based, emanating from forces and personalities near the seat of power at the center. The second, which follows from the first, is the extent to which the leaders of the movement, however well-motivated, arrogated to themselves a vision for the nation that was ethnocentrically and chauvinistically based on their own perception or conception of the national character or identity. These centered on the two leading sectarian families, the Mahdis and the Mirghanis, more for reasons of patronage than for spiritual and moral guidance. Collateral to that is the degree to which religion became pragmatically politicized, becoming part and parcel of the secular politics of the British administration, rather than the usual merger of the spiritual and the secular aspects of life in Islamic theology. Indeed, the initial philosophy of the original leaders was more widely reflected in the motto "Religion to God and Nation to All," which was not different from the Christian "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." Muslim fundamentalists or revivalists later saw this separation of temporal and holy matters as the effect of the West, which had to be corrected as part of the self-determination of the Islamic nation.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the nationalist movement in this context is the close interconnection between the dynamics of the internal Sudanese situation and Egypt's leverage and ambitions over the Sudan, a linkage that was rendered uniquely complex by the condominium arrangement and the history of relations between the two countries. With small groups posing as the representatives of the broad national interests and the condominium powers vying for influence over them, factions intrigued and maneuvered in a shifting network of alignments and realignments with the ruling powers. In the process, the British administration emerged as a third power, ostensibly concerned for the

country in its broader geographical scope. The colonial administration allied itself first with the pro-Egyptian Mirghanis, who had been anti-Mahdists, and collaterally with the tribal leaders, who were seen as more legitimate spokesmen of the populace. It then coop

erated with the rival Mahdist faction, favored for its anti-Egypt stance and the commitment to independence. And finally the government forged an alliance with the educated class, mostly the civil servants, whom they believed were more knowledgeable about the affairs of modern government and whom they had coopted or contained through involvement in the administration.

And indeed, one of the main reasons for British caution regarding independence was the fear that the Sudan would come under the domination of the Egyptians, whom they despised. They therefore worked to cultivate those nationalists who were “pro-Sudan for the Sudanese and anti-Egypt.” In 1946 Egypt and Britain concluded the Sidqi-Bevin treaty, which would have recognized the unity of the Sudan and Egypt under the Egyptian crown. In spontaneous reaction, both the Sudanese and the British administrators in the Sudan rose up against it in an uproar that eventually forced the condominium partners to abandon the plan. As Dawud Abd al-Latif recalled, when he threatened to go to the streets and demonstrate with the political movement, his British superior, Henderson, told him, “Wait, you will not be alone ... we may go all of us into the street.”⁶⁷

In the end Britain was outmaneuvered by Egypt, which was in turn outmaneuvered by the northern Sudanese at an opportune moment of magnanimity by a revolutionary leader, Muhammad Najib, who was half-Sudanese and could not stand in the way of self-determination for his second country. Since then, Egypt has resumed its historic importance as the gateway to the world beyond and has remained pivotal in the perspective of the Sudanese. For some this has been for reasons of love, for others for reasons of hate, and for most for reasons of dependence or fear. In contrast, Britain now seems very remote from the affairs of the Sudan.

The withdrawal of the British from the Sudan almost directly resulted in increasing insecurity for the rural masses of the North and of the South. The British policy of indirect rule had protected and preserved these people, but it left them disadvantaged with respect to development and

eventually, therefore, marginalized and vulnerable. This underscores the failure of the domestic leadership to mobilize a nationwide sentiment for independence in a genuinely representative way that would penetrate to the grass roots.

In comparison with the performance of the national leaders, the colonial administration acquired a higher degree of legitimacy than is

generally accorded colonial rulers. But what made the system exceed expectations was the quality of the people who managed it. They gained, through demonstrated effort and performance, a respect not normally accorded “infidel” or non-Muslim rulers. Of course, the mere fact that the northern Sudanese, as Muslims, were governed by infidels signified their defeat and submission to a militarily superior will, but the quality of what the British did defied any religious barriers of identity, participation, and legitimacy.

THE NORTHERN LEGACY

The history of Arabization and Islamization of the North is one of a complex interaction between the internal forces of Sudanese pluralism and the external linkages with Arabism and Islam and particularly with Egypt that oversimplified the image of the country as a monolithic Arab-Islamic whole. From the beginning of recorded history to the current dynamics of national identity Egypt has been, in varying forms and degrees, the most important regional power in Sudanese affairs. It can indeed be argued that, based on a comprehensive history of the Sudan, as much unites and divides between Egypt and certain parts of the northern Sudan as between the North and the South.

The complex and intense history of the Sudan indicates that the country is confused in its sense of identity and vision of its destiny. What is the Sudan today, the ancient Bilad al-Sudan, Nubia, or Kush, all of which were variations of the same meaning? What does it mean in the context of Arabization and Islamization not to recognize the color black for a freeman? What does it mean when the national identity and sustainable political aspirations have to be derived from a stronger, internationally more assertive neighbor? And what does it mean when the very notion of independence had to depend on a strategy of linking Sudanese interests with Egyptian aspirations, giving second place to the concerns and the fate of the rural masses within the country? It is even more ironic that the movement for independence and national sovereignty was significantly inspired and supported by external linkages with Egypt and its own nationalistic aspirations for unity with the Sudan.

As the dominant party in the reconquest, the British were the principal colonizers. By that very fact they were perceived as enemies, who

must be ousted. While they were at odds over the role of Egypt, both the Mahdists and the Mirghanists were united in their conviction that the British were conquerors, colonialists, and, more discreetly expressed, infidel Christians, who must go, even though in their character and performance they were highly admired.

The national leadership was focused on manipulating the British and Egyptian rulers and took little or no account of the rank and file in the countryside. The leadership was unable to formulate a clear vision of identity that would embrace the post-independence issues of religion and race. Furthermore, it did not address the challenge of finding a common ground in so diverse a country.

In many ways the strategies adopted by the foreign rulers, the British, whatever their motivation or interests, were more conducive to a broader-based perspective on the nation and its pluralistic identity and unity in diversity than were those of the subsequent nationalist leaders. The British recognized the reality of tribal configuration and used it effectively to maintain law and order and to promote an embracing sense of security and stability in the countryside. They honored the Sudanese sense of pride and dignity in their multiple ethnic identities but saw to it that no one lorded it over the others. Some sense of equality made it possible for the Sudanese to expect a harmonious evolution of a uniting identity based on peaceful interaction and equitable integration.

Apparently it was the presence of a third-party mediator that made such moderation possible. As long as the British were still in control, able to exercise that moderating influence and to ensure a functional degree of equality, the Arab-Muslim North could not impose its will on the South, particularly since the two parts of the country were administered separately and were geographically distinct. Only when the role of the superior third-party moderator was removed on independence and the parties were forced to deal directly with one another did religious intolerance and cultural chauvinism become manifest. An equally important lesson from the British approach to their northern subjects is the way they moderated their own power with deference values, of which

respect is highest in the consideration of the Sudanese. As one district commissioner intimated, the British appeared to operate on the principle, "If you show the Sudanese respect, they will happily obey your orders."⁶⁸

While British power or deference succeeded in moderating the atti-

tudes of Muslims toward their Christian rulers, it did not alter Arab prejudices against what they perceived as the black African races, especially the non-Muslim communities in the South, and the non-Arabs in the North. In many respects, this prejudice was shared by the British rulers themselves, but concealed by their sense of fairness and good administration. Indeed, the British approach to the administration of the South and the human dimension of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled differed considerably, if not in kind, certainly in degree.

The British did not have the same appreciation and respect for the Southerners and their cultures as they showed the northerners. Sir James Robertson, the civil secretary in the Sudan who later coached Nigeria into independence as the last British governor, wrote about Nigerian North-South relations with a perception that can be said to apply to the Sudan.

A more potent cause of ill-feeling was the difference in ordinary custom and behaviour between the dignified, polite, rather aloof Northerner and the uninhibited, vociferous Southerner who noisily showed his disagreement in Council or Parliament without good manners or restraint... . There was ... strong feeling that the North should secede from the Federation and give up the attempt to work with the Southerners. This agitation died down, but the ill-feeling engendered by ... conflict was not speedily overcome, and was always latent until independence and certainly lay behind the bitter reaction of the Northern people to the military coup at the start of January 1966, when Ibo officers murdered Northern and Western politicians and army officers and for some months were the rulers of Nigeria. When the reaction came, thousands of Ibos in the North were killed, often in the most brutal manner. The deep latent hatred boiled over.⁶⁹

In hindsight Robertson seems to have come to the conclusion that the North and the South in Nigeria are so different that a split into two countries might have been justified: "A note of mine written in December 1956 is relevant here. The general outlook of the people is so different from that of those in Southern Nigeria as to give them practically nothing

in common. There is less difference between an Englishman and Italian, both of whom have a common civilisation based on Greek and Roman foundations and on Christianity, than be-

tween a Muslim villager in Sokoto, Kano or Karsina, and an Ibo, an Ijaw or a Kalabari. How can any feeling of common purpose or nationality be built up between people whose culture, religion and mode of living is so completely different?"⁷⁰

This observation was made by the man who reversed the separatist southern policy in the Sudan in 1946. But in 1964, during a moment of remarkable candor that has not been previously documented, Robertson lamented to the author that he should never have reversed the separatist policy, for he should have realized that the two sets of peoples were too different to form a nation.⁷¹ Robertson clearly needed to be reassured that unity was an ideal that had to be aimed for and that hindsight revealed more the failures of those who did not live up to the challenge of nation building than the errors of those who postulated the ideal of national unity.

What proved particularly tragic for the Sudan is that the northern administrators, who took over from the British in the South, lacked their prudent sensitivity, empathy, and restraint; instead they were openly disrespectful if not disdainful toward the southern population. A complicating factor was what Dawud Abd al-Latif alluded to — the British preference for the tribal leaders as against the educated class, while the educated were naturally more at home with the British than with the tribal leaders. Suddenly thrust together, the new administrators, though Sudanese, were more estranged from the tribal leaders and therefore from the rural masses than the British had been.⁷² Accounts of the 1955 disturbances in the South are replete with descriptions of the manner in which the northern Sudanese administrators working in close conjunction with the northern traders contributed to the crisis of confidence, indeed legitimacy, that ultimately exploded in the mutiny that led to a full-fledged civil war. This itself indicates the limitation of northern identity as the foundation for national unity.

The processes of Arabization and Islamization were constrained as bases for an embracing national identity by several interactive factors. First, the processes involved never envisaged the territorial dimensions

of the country as it exists today. Second, assimilation was based on racial and religious stratification and discrimination that favored the Arab-Islamic identity and viewed with disdain and contempt the black African races and their heathen ways. Third, passage into the superior category was characterized by an eclectic process, which embraced elements of the preexisting identity, both racial and cultural, but cam-

ouflagged them with the garb of the honored identity. Fourth, since both models, the emulated and the abandoned, coexist in the Sudan and internationally relations between races, cultures, and religions still reflect the old assumptions of superiority and inferiority that underlay the processes of Arabization and Islamization.

Whatever the moderating effect of education and broadened world view, the northern Sudanese still respects the Arab-Islamic identity and disdains the negroid African non-Muslim. But since certain African racial and cultural elements are still visible in the assimilated Sudanese Arabs, it does not require a professional social psychologist to presume that such a disdain for elements visible in one's own physiognomy must at some degree of consciousness be a source of tension and disorientation. Indeed, the northern Sudanese tendency to exaggerate Arabism and Islam and to look down on the negroid races as slaves could well be the result of a deep-seated inferiority complex, or, to put it in reverse, a superiority complex as a compensational device for their obvious marginality as Arabs. An equally important factor is the linkage of the Arab-Islamic identity with foreign sources of inspiration, leadership, and patronage, which, except for the brief period of the Mahdist state, has been pervasive throughout history. Even the Mahdi could claim legitimacy only by linking his ancestry not only to the Arabian tribe of Quraysh, but to the lineage of the Prophet himself. Contrary to orthodox Islam, the descendants of the founders inherited the spiritual leadership, which in due course became transformed into a religious-political dynasty.

Sadiq al-Mahdi, the great-grandson of the original Mahdi and a member of the Umma party sees himself as uniquely qualified for leadership, not only as heir of the Mahdist dynasty, but also because of his Oxford University education. The religiously based political ambitions of Hassan al-Turabi, the leader of the NIF, are not entirely without a traditional foundation, since his family background is also one of spiritual leaders, and one of his ancestors is said to have been the first to declare himself the Mahdi in Mecca.⁷³ This background, combined with his advanced degrees in law from London and Paris, convinced Turabi he was the best

qualified for the leadership, both on religious grounds and by the yardstick of modernity. At an earlier stage, before the two men became political rivals, they reinforced each other's positions through friendship and intermarriage, but the relationship eventually turned into a bitter hostility within the family as the two vied for the religious and political leadership of the country.

Sadiq al-Mahdi and Hassan al-Turabi thus stand on the same religious, political, traditional, and modern ground for their claims to leadership. If Sadiq is to prevail over Turabi, he must invoke his hereditary authority, which, to Turabi, is not only reactionary, but insulting to his own ancestry. But for Turabi to assume that he is better qualified for leadership than Sadiq is not only to assert superiority in education, but also to dismiss the heredity of the Mahdist dynasty, which makes the affront both personal and institutional. The two men and their political stances symbolize the close interrelationship between the past and the present and their role in shaping the future. Of course, there may be differences in their interpretations of the principles of Islam and the relationship between religion and the state, but these are minimal in comparison with their conflicting interests in the politicization of religion and its manipulation in pursuit of power. Their primary differences are personal, focusing on competition over power.

Thus generations after Muhammad Ahmed — the Mahdi, who is still widely perceived in the North as the founder of modern Sudanese nationalism — his spiritual and political leadership has been personalized as a legacy to be passed on through the lineage system in a manner characteristic of the Sufist tradition, which the Mahdist revolution had initially aimed at eradicating, but failed to do. Instead, the legacy of the Mahdist revolution became coopted, if not captured, by Sufism. and sectarianism, both of which became features of the fusion between religion and politics in the Sudanese version of popular democracy. The enduring tragedy in the legacy of Mahdism lies in both its promise to the nation and its dismal failure to bring about the changes the Mahdi had sought to introduce. In particular, his war against Sufism only ended in the polarization of the Islamic doctrine in which the ideals of orthodoxy that he advocated compromised with the realities of the Sufist approach in the Sudan, leaving religious-political leaders poised between the two and the nation polarized behind them. Sufism was transformed into political sectarianism in which the descendants of the Mahdi would be reduced to only one faction among competing sectarian factions, albeit one of the leading two, and perhaps the most powerful of them all. Even more telling is the fact that the original Mahdi designated as his

successor someone outside not only his family and clan, but his tribe. Since then, however, the religious dynasty he founded has strictly followed primogeniture in succession. Mahdism became Sufism in practice.

Had that been the only dominant legacy of the Mahdist experience,

it might indeed have been a blessing in that Islam would have been more locally oriented to the eclectic principles of Sufism, which rest on the notion of live and let live, of enriching and advancing Islam through the liberal integration of local spiritual and moral values. But the Mahdist revolution left the Sudanese with the aspiration of a universally valid dogma of orthodox Islam, which is avowed by the current leadership of the NIF, foremost among whom is its leader, Hassan al-Turabi. To make things particularly difficult for his Mahdist competitors, Turabi has become one of the leading standard bearers of the Islamic state envisioned by Muhammad Ahmed, the Mahdi, not only for the Sudan, but for the world. Turabi brings skills and global perspective greater than his own lineage or Mahdist predecessors could have envisioned.

The present political baggage that the Sudan is called on to bear therefore contains a load of historical memories going beyond but focusing on the Mahdist legacy which is at once national, collective, local, clannish, and individual in its outlook. Even the brutality or excessive human sacrifice by which the Mahdist revolution was ventured has left a legacy that the revivalist leaders like Hassan al-Turabi invoke. Citing the European experience, particularly the French Revolution, Turabi has repeatedly argued that major changes in history can only be effected with immense sacrifice of human life, that massive bloodshed is the key to success in effecting fundamental changes. To brood over the loss of life is, for Turabi, to be small-minded and to succumb to the intimidation of the counterforce against needed revolutionary change.

This contextualized interpretation of the history of the Mahdiyya is particularly important because, in light of the lineage-oriented politics of the Sudan, where history is politicized to serve contemporary purposes, understanding the psychology of the principal actors is key to deciphering the coded messages that are rampant in Sudanese political life. The main point is that there are vested interests that are not as national — and even less global — than they are often assumed to be. Indeed, their root is fundamentally parochial and even individualistic.

In the context of the relationship with the South, Sadiq al-Mahdi and

Hassan al-Turabi are profoundly convinced about the superiority of what they stand for in Islam and its concomitant Arab identity in the racial and the cultural sense of the concept.⁷⁴ Conversely, they see the pagan South as primitive and eligible for salvation through Islam. They

see the Christian element as a superficial, alien influence whose roots have not yet deepened and therefore can be eradicated. As an Islamic scholar recently explained, "For Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood], the south was perceived as a distant, vaguely symbolic place. Like the rest of the educated, Ikhwan only saw in the south the alienated, lost brother, who had to be retrieved through the spread of Islam, the Arabic language and better communications."⁷⁵

The northern Sudanese identity is thus the culmination of a complex historical process that at times entailed contradictions. Arab-Islamic conquest, though not decisive, imposed a system in which the symbols of identity favored by official policies were reinforced and postulated as the ideal. And yet the framework accommodated traditional values and institutions. Indigenous pride also affected the process, which culminated in the unique vision of the Arab-Islamic identity that now prevails in the North.⁷⁶

The fact that successive administrations, including the British-dominated Anglo-Egyptian condominium, consistently recognized and reinforced this vision of identity has only deepened its hold on the northern psyche. Ali Mazrui has observed that the region "has achieved a high degree of cultural cohesion. The North on its own could easily be a nation state in a classical European sense within little more than a generation."⁷⁷ But Mazrui's assessment is clearly overstated, for it is widely recognized that the unity and cohesion of the North exists in large measure only because of confrontation with the South.⁷⁸

In the ever-widening circles of contacts and interaction, the northern psyche is being challenged by the new framework of pluralistic nationalism. The identity of the North is being questioned not only on its own terms, but especially in the context of the whole Sudan; hence the crisis. Reference to a crisis of national identity often offends many northerners because they have become fully assimilated into this composite identity feel at peace and serene with it, see nothing objectionable in the assumed superiority of Arabism and Islam over the indigenous African elements, and, indeed, find it difficult to understand

why the South is so adamantly resistant to this rich, even superior concept of identity.⁷⁹ To northerners, the composite Arab-Muslim identity, in the words of one source, symbolizes “the best nation God has created.”⁸⁰

In sharp contrast to the North, the peoples of the South have re-

mained among the most isolated and untouched by the outside world on the continent of Africa. The barriers between the North and the South were also fortified by a bitter history of hostilities and mutual disdain. And while this attitude was modified by British colonial intervention, it was in some sense deepened, refined, and perpetuated in the modern context of nation building.

If the North were a separate country perhaps all these factors would not be of much significance or concern, except to those within the North who have retained and who jealously guard their non-Arab identity. But the North has the South to contend with. The National Islamic Front and the military regime in Khartoum and the SPLM-SPLA now symbolize the latest versions or models of identities that have evolved over a long period of history with deep-rooted assumptions. While this history has witnessed bright moments of moderation and even transformation, the two positions now appear to be incompatible. When the experience of the southerners is contrasted with the processes of Arabization and Islamization that the North has gone through, there can be no doubt about the magnitude of the identity crisis in the Sudan and what it will take to meet the challenge of redefining an inclusive national identity.

Chapter 3 Southern Identity: Resistance

The evolution of the southern identity of resistance began in the period preceding the Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule, a time when the South was a hunting ground for slaves, and continued in the colonial era, which, while objectionable in principle, gave the people of the South the only period of peace that they had experienced for centuries. As in the North, the precolonial period in the South could be described as traditional, while the intervention of colonial administration marks the transitional stage that also generated the modernization phase, which in turn was accelerated by postcolonial developments.

PRECONDOMINIUM RESISTANCE

The significant aspect of the southern confrontation with the Arabs, whether before or after the advent of Islam, is that while the Arabs persistently invaded the South for slaves, they never penetrated deeply and did not attempt to settle. Swamps, flies, tropical humidity, and the fierce resistance of the tribes kept the contact marginal, even as it was devastatingly violent. Furthermore, since the Arab Muslim was interested in the actual or potential value of the Negro as a slave, he did not desire to interact and integrate with him in the same manner as in the North. If the Negroes of the South had been converted to Islam, the Arabs could not have justified slave raids on them. Consequently, as Dunstan Wai has observed, "prior to the Turkish-Egyptian adventures into the South, there had been no ... political alliance or unity between the North and the South of the present Sudan.¹

Although the Turko-Egyptians and the Mahdists invaded the South to extend their control, and might therefore be distinguished from the ordinary commercial slave traders, their raids also involved slavery and were in fact indistinguishable from those of ordinary slave hunters. For that reason, local southern memory conceptually fuses them

and associates them with the total destruction of the world. Indeed, it was not until the Turco-Egyptian government opened the Bahr al-Ghazal and Equatoria provinces in the 1820s and established more security from outside invaders that the slave trade became well established and assumed large proportions.

At the time of the Turkish conquest, much of what is now northern Sudan was under the control of two kingdoms, Sennar and Darfur, while the adjacent southern waterways and the adjoining pastures and plains were dominated by the four largest ethnic groups, the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, and Anuak, which had resisted northern incursion for centuries. Since Muhammad Ali, the Turkish ruler in Egypt, could not satisfy his need for gold in the North, he sought to extend the scope of his search with the help of his northern subjects, who hoped to lighten the government's demand for revenues and acquire their own fortunes in the South.

Captain Salim, a Turkish naval officer, led expeditions during the period 1839–41 to explore the source of the White Nile and to probe the economic potential of the region. He succeeded in penetrating the swampy Sudd region as far as Gondokoro and Rejaf near today's southern capital town of Juba and thereby paved the way for subsequent expeditions. These groups of explorers, soldiers, traders, and Christian missionaries included Europeans, Egyptians, Syrians, other Ottoman subjects, and northern Sudanese, many of whom soon established their own armies throughout the South. They obtained ivory and slaves, using trade and raid, and imposed tributes on the subjugated populations. European traders with Arab partners and servants established slave camps, or zaribas, as centers for trade and local control. Abel Alier describes the “tragic drama that was to sow “the seeds of bitterness, violence and resistance and the degree to which that legacy has continued to poison North-South relations to this day:

By the middle of the 1860s and the early 1870s, the military and commercial networks were expanded throughout the South by both Northern Sudanese and Turco-Egyptian officials, sometimes working in competition, but often working in conjunction with each other. Thus from

the point of view of Southern peoples ... there was little to distinguish between the two groups of exploiters and plunderers.... In Bahr El Ghazal the Ja'ali merchant, Zubeir Rahma Mansour reigned supreme, uprooting the Fertit tribes, developing and expanding the administrative centres and slave

routes through Bahr El Ghazal, Darfur and Kordofan. When Egyptian forces were unable to subdue him, the Khedive Ismail appointed him governor of Bahr El Ghazal in 1873, elevating him at the same time to the honour of 'Pasha.' So great is the esteem Zubeir won in some quarters of the Sudan that at independence in 1956, a street was named after him in the national capital, despite the offence this gave, and still gives, to the Southern Sudanese.²

Resistance to incursions from the Turks and the Arab slave raiders fostered in southerners a deep-rooted suspicion and hatred of any foreigners coming from the North; they regarded all of them as invaders and exploiters. Even Sir Samuel Baker, whose mission from Ismail Pasha, the viceroy of Egypt, in 1869 was to establish a chain of forts and to suppress slavery, got no cooperation; his impressions of the destruction inflicted on the people are graphic: "It is impossible to describe the change that has taken place since I last visited this country. It was then a perfect garden, thickly populated and producing all that man would desire. The villages were numerous, groves of plantains fringed the steep cliff on the river bank, and the natives were neatly dressed in the bark cloth of the country. The scene has changed: All is wilderness. The population has fled. Not a village is to be seen. This is the certain result of the settlement of Khartoum traders. They kidnap the women and children for slaves and plunder and destroy wherever they set their foot."³

Sir Samuel Baker did not succeed either in conquering the South or in suppressing the slave trade. No effective administrative posts were established, and the slave trade continued to flourish unabated. In 1874 Baker was succeeded by General Gordon, who had distinguished himself militarily in China. Gordon's mission was to establish the administration and to fight slavery. When he left two years later, "Egyptian authority was still tenuous and the slave trade continued to flourish."⁴

Shortly thereafter, Gordon was appointed governor-general of the Sudan with the mission of pacifying the country and suppressing the slave trade. Although he had some success in fighting slavery "by employing ... the small body of river police that had been formed in 1864, ... bribery and

corruption generally nullified his efforts in this respect.⁵ The Turkish administration brought a general devastation on the whole country North and South.

Under those circumstances, it is easy to see why the Mahdist revolt

was initially popular as an anti-Turkish movement, an alliance against a common enemy, rather than a basis for a lasting national unity. The response of the Nilotic peoples of the South to the Mahdi is a good example of the selective manner in which they have tended to adopt and to assimilate Arab-Islamic elements into their own cultural context. They were spiritually inspired by the holy message of the Mahdi, known as “Maadi in their enunciation, whom they believed had appeared to free all the peoples of the country from foreign oppression. The Dinka, one of the larger Nilotic groups, composed hymns that portrayed the Mahdi as a manifestation of the Spirit of Deng, their deity associated with rain and lightning as manifestations of God's might. They prayed to him to save them from their long suffering at the hands of successive invaders, who eventually included the Mahdists. Mahdi, as a symbol of spiritual power and righteousness, became known as the Son of Deng, while the Mahdists themselves came to be viewed as Arab aggressors.⁶

The Nilotics and the southerners in general did not embrace Islam, and they soon came into conflict with the Mahdists. Fanatically motivated and sure of their divine mission to rid the world of infidels, the Mahdists carried the holy war into the South and, with it, full-scale slavery returned.⁷ Although the southerners were anxious to rid themselves of Egyptian rule, they did not want new alien masters, especially slave traders. They resisted. The Dinka even used the very hymn they had composed in praise of the Mahdi as a prayer for the help of their assimilated spirit, “Maadi, Son of Deng, in fighting the Mahdist aggressors. These experiences made the southerners suspect any stranger.

The pioneering Christian missionaries who reached the South before the reconquest found it difficult to be accepted. Bishop Gwynne records an experience: As some missionaries cleared the ground and erected their tents to settle, a group of curious and suspicious natives looked on. “The headman asked why they had come, were they Government? No. They had come to make friends with them, to learn their language, to teach them of God, to lift them up to a higher state of civilization. ‘The Arabs used to make promises like these to win our confidence and suddenly

one night they would bring out their guns, surround our villages, kill our old people and carry the rest into slavery.' 8

Major Titherington, one of the earliest British administrators in

Dinkaland, wrote that the social system and personal outlook of the Raik Dinka were in a state of deterioration as a result of the continued harrying they had received from the Arab slave traders and of the demoralizing effects of the invasions they had suffered during the half-century preceding British rule. "They lost hundreds of thousands of cattle; men, women, and children in thousands were slaughtered, carried off into slavery, or died of famine; but the survivors kept alive in the deepest swamps, bravely attacked the raiders when they could, and nursed that loathing and contempt for the stranger and all his ways that even now they are just losing.⁹

The Dinka refer to the Turko-Egyptian and the Mahdist periods as the time when "the world was spoiled, an abomination of which they speak with consistency and vividness. In the extensive interviews conducted by the author with Dinka chiefs and elders about the past, present, and future of their people in the context of the Sudan, this theme in their collective memory emerged as a vital factor, which nourishes their identity of resistance to the Arab-Islamic North. They remember the Mahdist revolution as first claiming to rescue the people from the repressions and the exploitation of Turko-Egyptian rule, but then turning out to be itself a major cause of destruction. In the words of Chief Giirdit, "Although the Mahdi started as liberator, his rule became bad. He wanted to enslave the people.¹⁰ Chief Giirdit specifies the Turks and the Dongolawi tribe of the Mahdi as the sources of destruction in the South: "They were the people who spoiled our country ... captured our people and sold them. They would attack and destroy an area, and when they conquered [that area] they would take the people and add them to their army as slaves.... If a man had children, one might give them a child or two in the hope that they would spare his life and maybe help him with some means of livelihood.¹¹

Chief Makuei Bilkuei made the point almost obsessively: "It was the Ansar [Mahdist followers] who destroyed the country.... That is what is called the spoiling of the world.... Yes, [they] would come with camels and donkeys and mules and guns.... That's how [they] killed people.... [They] destroyed areas until [they] reached us here. Then [they] took the

people and sold them.... They said, 'La Illah, ila Allah, Muhammad Rasul Allah.' [There is no God but the One God and Muhammad is God's Messenger]. That was the way they chanted while they slaughtered and slaughtered and slaughtered.¹² Chief Makuei, an old man presumably in his nineties at the time of the interview in

1973, claims not to speak from hearsay: "I have seen the Ansar and I have seen the destruction that came to our people. I saw the horses of the Ansar.¹³ Chief Arol Kacwol sounded almost sarcastic when he said, commenting on the destruction, "It came from these people who are now our relatives — the Arabs. That was how they humiliated us.¹⁴

Although the accounts of the chiefs and elders present the Dinka as pathetic victims of unscrupulous human hunters, they also substantiate the theme of southern resistance alluded to by Major Titherington. According to Chief Albino Akot, once the message of an Arab attack was transmitted: "The Dinka would beat the drums of war.... The scouts would go ahead to look for where the Arabs were.... The Arabs would stop and sleep, thinking they had left the Dinka behind, but the Dinka ... would come and attack them.... Some people among them would be captured and the people who had been captured by the Arabs would be released.¹⁵ Chief Biong Mijak recounted that the Arab "would go ... and would kill any people he found.... Then the Dinka would go and search for him and attack him at night and kill his people also.¹⁶

While the armies of the more professional slave lords were better equipped, the Arab tribesmen who ventured attacks for slaves were not much better armed than the Dinka, and oral history has it that there was a relative balance of power between them and the southern tribes. Chief Pagwot Deng characterized Arab-Dinka wars as initially reflecting a balance that was later disturbed by Arab acquisition of modern arms: "The strength of the Arab came only recently when he found his horses and his guns. In the past ... [t]he Arabs destroyed us but we also destroyed them.... They captured our people and we captured their people. This is why there are some Arabs in our Dinka-land today.... His man is with us and our man is with him.¹⁷

Nevertheless, there can be no comparison between the massive destruction and indignity inflicted on the South by institutionalized slavery and the relatively insignificant numbers that the southerners captured among the invaders from the North. This is why slavery has indeed remained the most glaring reminder of the bitter history of North-South,

Arab-African hostilities and animosities. Indeed, while the Dinka also captured Arabs, they strongly reject the assertion that slavery was a norm associated with tribal wars and practiced by all, including the southern tribes among themselves. To them, slavery is inherently Arab and antithetical to Dinka cultural values. The Arabs

they captured, according to them, were never enslaved, but adopted into Dinka families. They became relatives.

Southern resistance before the condominium rule was thus a struggle against waves of slave hunters from the North, and in the North today there is a strong feeling against the mention of the slave trade. Even teaching about slavery during the colonial era was uniformly condemned in the North as an encouragement of southern anger and hatred toward the North promulgated by the vicious agents of imperialism. Ismail al-Azhari, the first prime minister and later president of the Sovereignty Council of State, called it a “carefully worked-out, diabolical scheme which has for its aims the fostering of antagonism and alienation between the sons of one country.”¹⁸

The southern spokesman at the 1965 Round Table Conference on the Southern Problem, however, argued that slavery “cannot be forgotten especially where nothing has been done to demonstrate clearly a change of heart among the responsible offspring of those who were responsible for it. We remind the Conference of this historical event because we believe there is a lesson to be drawn from knowing about it. Knowing it may bring us wisdom to avoid further and future calculated missteps.”¹⁹

A distinction should be drawn between a discussion of slavery that aims at fanning South-North hostility and a realistic understanding of the way in which the past has conditioned the present. Being blind to the origins of the identity conflict means that the nation cannot learn from the lessons of history and heal the wounds of the past. And when that history repeats itself, as recent allegations of the return of slavery have tragically demonstrated, and those wounds are reopened, whatever prospects for healing there might be are considerably diminished. A clear understanding of the past, then, is one of the prerequisites for curing the present ills.

Northerners generally tend to explain slavery defensively as a universal phenomenon in which the European West was a worse culprit. They also maintain that the lot of those enslaved by the Arabs is far better than that

or those enslaved by the western world. According to Tim Niblock, while the element of northern penetration of the South through the slave trade "did help to mould the perceptions which Southerners had of Northern Sudanese at the time of independence.... To lay primary emphasis on the destructive Northern impact may not be justified.²⁰ Niblock argues that slavery in the South was

not organized by northerners, but rather by Europeans, Turks, and Egyptians. Citing northern Sudanese writers, he explains that slavery in the Sudan, unlike the system practiced in the British colonies and the Americas, involved mostly domestic service in which the slaves were integrated into the household. The slaves converted to Islam, and their children, usually the offspring of mixed unions with Muslim masters, became assimilated as freemen into the Arab-Muslim community in which they lived.²¹

It is, however, important to point out some distinctive factors in the two situations. First, what counts the most for southerners are the historical practices that still have practical implications in their present context. The history of North-South relations has more contemporary significance for them than the historical conduct of the now far-removed Europeans. Second, southerners are not descendants of slaves living in their former master's context, but a people in their own geographically defined environment, with demands and expectations for full freedom and equality in the context of the nation-state. To compare favorably the conditions of their unfortunate brothers and sisters who fell victim to Arab slavery with the plight of those enslaved by the Europeans is demeaning and irrelevant. That past indignities are relevant to present northern attitudes has generated an embitterment that has nothing to do with the blessings or curses of slaves in Western and Arab societies.²² As Gabriel Warburg has argued, "While historically Sudanese Muslims neither invented slave raids nor were the first to introduce them into the Sudan, the fact remains that European or Egyptian ivory and slave traders, both of whom preceded the Sudanese, left this region once it ceased to be profitable. The northern Sudanese, on the other hand, sought to establish themselves in the South on a permanent basis, and hence their legacy as one-time slavers has made it difficult for them to convince their southern brethren of their benevolent intentions."²³ In the words of Robert Collins, "The decision to plant the bitter seeds of Arab intervention quickly blossomed into the distrust and fear which still dominates relations between the Northern and Southern Sudanese to this very day."²⁴ It is, therefore, not a case of comparing types of slavery, but rather of how deep-rooted historical animosities between two different

and territorially separate communities are being dealt with today.
Northern blindness to the historical roots is merely escapism.

The precondominium phases of Sudanese history represent a con

text in which the indigenous population had not yet been significantly affected by radical social changes, despite the disruptions of the nineteenth-century upheavals. Indeed, the country had resisted potential Arab and Turkish influences, and British rule brought with it the transition to modernity.

CONDOMINIUM

The Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule, which was essentially British rule with Egypt as little more than a rubber-stamp partner, brought an end to Arab-African hostilities and established law and order in the Sudan. Initially however, northerners and southerners alike resisted the new rulers, seeing them as yet another wave of foreign invaders. They generally considered the British to be the Turks returning. Indeed, throughout their rule in the Sudan, the British were referred to as Turuk, the Sudanese word for Turks.

Southern groups whose resistance movements have been well documented include the Dinka, the Nuer, the Atwot, the Anuak, and the Zande. Most of the leaders of these movements were charismatic holy men, some classified as prophets, committed to peace and justice among their followers, but evoking violence against foreign aggressors. One of the episodes most remembered took place on December 8, 1919, when the Aliab Dinka clashed with the government forces, leaving dead the governor of Mangalla, Major Chauncy Stigard, and his commanding officer, Major White. In retaliation “nearly a thousand Northern Sudanese and Equatorial troops brought fire and sword to the three thousand square miles of Aliabland, supported by gun-boats on the Nile and equipped with artillery and the ubiquitous machineguns.²⁵

Clearly, considering the imbalance between the powers of the condominium government and the tribes armed with spears, southern resistance could only be judged as an expression of the human instinct for freedom and foolhardy courage.²⁶ The civil secretary, Sir Harold McMichael, implied both of these qualities when he commented on the security problems facing the government in the South, using language that preceded the sensitizing effects of anthropology: “The troubles

experienced by the government in the swampy areas of the Upper Nile, whether on the Abyssinian border or farther west [are] ... attrib-

utable to a mixture of the natural mistrust, based on bitter experience of the old days, which was felt by these savages for any government of northern extraction, the incident of witchdoctors, and the zeal of the young warriors to 'blood' themselves.²⁷

Pervasive southern resistance and the government's view of the people of the South as savages led the British to appoint military men as administrators in the South for the first two decades of condominium rule. These men were drawn from the Egyptian army or the King's African Riflemen and were thought of as having the tough hand necessary to impose law and order. As Robert Collins noted, "These seconded military officers were preferred for the Southern Sudan, where they were required to lead police patrols and punitive expeditions against recalcitrant Southerners."²⁸

The officer in the South, on his part, had to balance considerations on both sides if he were to succeed in introducing a radically different kind of government to the indigenous population. Superior as the military power of the government clearly was, southerners "had no cause to accept British authority simply because it was there. They had resisted alien rule in the past. They had continued to do so upon the appearance of the British officers and their Sudanese troops."²⁹ Nevertheless, "Law and order were the first objectives [of the British], and if not accepted by the Africans, had to be reluctantly impressed upon them.... The British either had to rule or depart, and since they could not abandon the Nile, ... [they] had to remain and govern by force of arms if necessary."³⁰

Ironically the spiritual leaders of the resistance movement only wanted their people to be left alone in peace and security, while the government wanted to penetrate their society and assert its control. It was a clash of identities, cultures, and the substantive values of power; the coercive force of modern, Western-style government came in direct confrontation with the divine authority of traditional African leadership. As Collins observed: "Thus, even though the men possessed of divinity, the kujurs, known among the Nilotic people as prophets, consistently professed peaceful intentions, their desire to remain aloof from the government was

invariably interpreted as belligerence and their appeals to supernatural powers regarded as unabashedly subversive. They did not oppose the British; they simply did not wish to acknowledge their authority since that which they recognized was divine. In the subsequent contest of powers, British machineguns proved more potent than the divinity of Deng.³¹

On the other hand, why would the people not oppose the British — foreigners who were at best uninvited guests and whose intentions were highly suspect — unless they proved otherwise, that their motives were noble or at least harmless? To provide this proof and gain the necessary local support, British policy was to establish and maintain law and order but otherwise to leave the people alone.

Lord Cromer, the consul-general in Cairo who was the effective ruler of Egypt and the Sudan, initially adopted an unencumbered attitude toward Anglo-Egyptian administration. He formulated his policy on the basis that “The purely native requirements are, in fact, very simple.... A light system of taxation, some very simple forms for the administration of civil and criminal justice, and the appointment of a few carefully selected officials with a somewhat wide discretionary power to deal with local details are all that for the time being is necessary.”³²

This policy meant not only building on the preexisting cultures, values, and institutions, but recognizing, formalizing, and encouraging tribal or ethnic groupings and the dichotomy between North and South. Articulating his southern policy in the language of the day, Cromer argued that law and order could be maintained among “the savages who inhabit this region through tribal law with military supervision: “I do not suppose that the most ardent advocate, whether of internationalism or of equality or of freedom to all creeds and races, would seriously contend that it would have been possible in practice to have worked a system under which Kwat Wad Awailbung, a Shilluk who murdered Ajok Wad Deng because the latter bewitched his son, and caused him to be eaten by a crocodile, would have been tried by a procedure closely resembling that followed at Paris or Lyons... ³³ In his view the government in the South should not attempt to take a “civilized form, for to do so would be to undertake “very serious risks.”³⁴

A gratuitous agent for modernization in the South was found in the Christian missionaries. Their influence, it was hoped, could both modernize the South and win the confidence of its inhabitants, which the slave trade had destroyed.³⁵ Egyptian Muslims objected, but the

condominium government answered that the field was open to whoever had the desire and the means. In sharp contrast to both the earliest and the contemporary phases, the Muslims then seem to have lacked the requisite resources for the promotion of the faith. Nevertheless, during the peace that followed, Islam's influence increased in

southern towns through the Muslim traders and civil servants in a manner somewhat similar to what had happened in the North. Although some tribes, notably the Nilotics, did not become susceptible to Arab-Muslim culture, other tribes, especially in towns and trading centers, adopted Muslim names, northern dress, and other elements of Arab culture.³⁶

Notwithstanding a degree of favoritism to the Christian missions, the government was almost neutral on the issue of the potential Arabization and Islamization of the South. Indeed, the rather passive manner in which the government encouraged Christian proselytization in the South disturbed the missionaries. Rev. Wilson Cash observed: "The Government is scrupulously fair to Moslems and pagans, and in religious matters adopts a strictly neutral attitude. The task of evangelization is no part of the Government's work and it falls to the mission alone to decide whether these Southern pagan tribes shall be left to be captured for Islam or whether they shall be won for Jesus Christ."³⁷ Thus while the government felt that strict separation of religion and the state was not acceptable to the Muslim population in the North, it introduced state neutrality or impartiality on religious matters in the South.

The Egyptian anti-British revolution of 1919 led the British to break the close connection between the Sudan and Egypt and, as a further obstacle to the spread of Arab influence and nationalism in the Nile Valley, to tighten their policy of separate development of the North and the South, marking a new phase in what became known as the Southern Policy. In the words of one historian, "This policy clearly set out to encourage an African — as opposed to an Arab-Muslim — identity in the Southern Sudan, since it was felt that the indigenous institutions and the traditional cultures were not strong enough to withstand the onslaught of Arabism and Islam."³⁸ It entailed the creation of separate military units in the South staffed with southern recruits under the command of British officers, with northerners and Egyptians totally excluded. The use of English as a lingua franca and the return to indigenous southern customs were encouraged to the exclusion of all persons and things northern. In 1922 the Passports and Permits Ordinance was promulgated. Under this rule permission for non-Sudanese to enter the Sudan or for Sudanese to

travel from North to South could be refused or withdrawn at will. Traffic from the South to the North was virtually nonexistent.

The government subsequently decided to seek expert anthropological advice on the implementation of the various aspects of the southern policy. Building on such expert opinion, the government devised more vigorous methods of reorganization. In 1930 Civil Secretary Sir Harold MacMichael, under the instructions of the governor-general, restated the southern policy in what he described as "simple terms.

The policy of the Government in the Southern Sudan is to build up a series of self-contained racial or tribal units with structure and organization based, to whatever extent the requirement of equity and good government permit, upon the indigenous customs, traditional usage and beliefs....

It is the aim of the Government to encourage, as far as possible, Greek and Syrian traders rather than the Gellaba (Northern) type. Permits to the latter should be decreased unobtrusively but progressively and only the best type of Gellaba whose interests are purely commercial and pursued in a legitimate manner should be admitted. The limitation of Gellaba trade to towns or established routes is essential.... Every effort should be made to make English the means of communication among the men themselves to the complete exclusion of Arabic.³⁹

The vernacular was taught in the southern elementary schools, with an introduction to English, which was made the medium of instruction in postelementary schools. In the field of administration of justice, the Chiefs' Courts Ordinance was passed in 1931 to formalize the functions of tribal institutions. Unlike northern Sudan, where Friday was the day of rest, Sunday was made the official resting day in southern Sudan.

Although checking northern nationalism was a motive behind the southern policy protecting the South was the primary British consideration. K. D. D. Henderson pointed out some of the reasons for the exclusion of the northerners from the South as the British administrators saw them:

The Northerner for ... [the British administrator] was either a raider or a trader. Up till the middle 'twenties the Beggara were still lifting slaves

trader. Up till the middle twenties the Daggara were still taking slaves south of the river and disposing of them to inaccessible markets far to the north. When not slave raiding they were poaching elephants or hunting giraffe or lifting cattle. When they

condescended to do a little trading, they usually swindled the unsophisticated Nilote or paid him with counterfeit coins. As for the professional trader, the Jellabi, he in baronial eyes was an equally undesirable immigrant, battenning on the villages, selling rubbishy goods at a vast profit, and introducing venereal disease. He had always preyed upon the Southerner and now he threatened to interfere with progress, as the Indian was doing in East Africa, by monopolising petty trade and cash farming.⁴⁰

Careful British planning and sensitivity to the reactions of the southerners gradually won the confidence of the people. This largely accounts for the success of government policies in developing a sense of identity based on both indigenous elements and Christian Western cultural norms. To the average southerner, the British were no longer imperialist intruders, but “good people, more benefactors than malefactors. And, indeed, whatever can be said against British rule in the Sudan, it brought the longest period of peace and security, at least from invasion and the use of crude force, that the South has experienced throughout its recorded history. The unfaltering goodwill and confidence the British won for that is well supported by oral history accounts, embellished with mythology. Even the educated, who are the most articulate against the colonial character of British rule, acknowledge the superior performance of the British in the establishment of peace, civic order, and justice.

Some elders even present British intervention in the Sudan as motivated by the desire to save the black man from Arab slavers. In view of the pressures by European missionaries on the British government before condominium rule and the role the British played in suppressing slavery throughout the period of Turko-Egyptian rule, this view is not an entirely naive version of history. Chief Makuei Bilkuei presents the English as having been “brought by the chiefs to rescue their people: “It is our fathers — people like Bilkuei, people like Kwol Arob — who brought the English ... [because of] the indignity the Ansar were inflicting upon us.... If no one had been taken away to be sold, the English would not have come.⁴¹ Virtually every chief and elder interviewed made the same point, describing the British as coming in defense of the South against the

Arabs, ending the wars of slavery, and bringing peace.

What is particularly significant about these accounts — however na-

ive they may sound to someone with a sophisticated understanding of history — is that they reflect a perspective of alienation from the North and a degree of moral affinity with the more distant European. Indeed, this view of history is in large measure an explanation of contemporary conditions and relationships, reinforced by the influence of Christianity and Western culture on modern southern identity.

An important factor in the way the British won the confidence of the rural population not only in the South but throughout the country was their policy of indirect rule. As chief Chier Rian put it, “Local leaders took care of local administration such as settling the disputes relating to cattle. Then the British would come periodically to review the cases. When they found that a person had been penalized too severely in a particular case, they reduced the penalty to a lesser sentence.... So the Dinka began to like the British and to cooperate with them. They began to be aware of the government.”⁴²

One of the remarkable features of British administration in the Sudan was its effectiveness relative to its remoteness and the lightness of its penetration. Sir Gawain Bell explained that young Sudanese he encountered were unaware of “how very lightly the Sudan was administered: that immense country, a million square miles. Population of what? Nine million, ten million? A total administrative staff of perhaps 120 British in the field: rather less, a hundred, perhaps. Ma'murs, sub-ma'murs ... what, another hundred? Sudanese police officers: what, one per province? No. Three per province, perhaps. And a total police force, I think I'm right in saying, of six thousand all locally enlisted men.”⁴³ Robert Collins, writing of 1919, noted: “The tenuous British presence was perhaps best symbolized by the thin red line of only seventeen British administrators in the Bahr al-Ghazal and Mongalla, a region twice the size of Britain.”⁴⁴

As the southerners began to observe the British, judge them favorably, and trust them, they became receptive to their innovations. It was then that missionary work, which southerners associated with the government, and which they had initially resisted, began to bear fruit. Indeed, evolution

of interracial and cross-cultural relations in the South owed much to missionaries. Most were not British: Americans, Italians, Australians, and New Zealanders are among those remembered by those interviewed. Chief Benjamin Lang Juk spoke highly of the “fathers and the sisters. If one's son went to school, he learned to be respectful. If one's daughter went to school, she was treated with

respect. They used to take care of our children as though they were their own.... We were very happy with their education.⁴⁵ In local languages, schoolchildren became known as the children of the missionaries.

Despite the implied mutual respect, and perhaps because of it, the policy of civilizing the South through the missionaries was culturally more revolutionary than was supposed. The Christian method of religious acculturation differed markedly from the Islamic method, for while Muslim education is largely supplementary to preexisting cultures, Christianity aimed at replacing the old order with a modern Western-oriented worldview. Rev. Wilson Cash explained this radicalism: "When the C.M.S. [Church Missionary Society] viewed the Sudan as a missionary sphere it was with a view to planting the Gospel of Christ among a people who were being introduced to modern life guided by western minds. It was an effort to demonstrate that apart from Christianity true progress could not be obtained. The beginning of the work coincided with the dawn of a new era and yet when it was only dawn. The changes most people saw coming in the Sudan had not to any great extent affected the pagan tribes, but those who looked into the future saw that the old order must pass away and give place to an entirely new condition of life."⁴⁶

Although conversion implied change in all aspects of the social order, Christianity did not follow the political role of the traditional religions as did Islam in the northern Sudan. In the South, religion became disentangled from politics and was practiced as a matter of individual spiritual life. As already noted, although the government favored Christianity its policy toward the missionary societies, which represented various churches, was ironically perceived by the missionaries as one of "strict ... impartiality."⁴⁷

The abandonment of the relationship between politics and religion in traditional society and the separation between the new faith and national politics created among the educated southern Sudanese an attitude different from that which prevailed among the Muslims of the North. To a Muslim, "Islam ... is a creed and a regulation at the same time ... a Religion and a State which can never be severed; to the educated

southerner, "Religion is a matter of individual consciousness.⁴⁸

The long-term implications of the South-North separate policy were not clear to the British, but they did contemplate the possibility of the

South's being eventually linked with East Africa.⁴⁹ As Robert Collins has observed, initially this separation between the British administrators in the North and those in the South signified a qualitative differentiation, with the cream of the political service confined to the North and the nonpensionable military officers in the South.⁵⁰ The attitude toward the South of the dominant group that served in the North was, according to Collins, racist: "At worst, they adopted Arab attitudes toward the Africans of the Southern Sudan, regarding them as savages compared with the more sophisticated northerners. At best, they ignored the Southern Sudanese, hoping that they could be controlled with as little expenditure as possible. Throughout the Condominium many members of the Political Service had neither understanding of nor sympathy for the Southern Sudan and its peoples and made little effort to acquire either."⁵¹

The two sets of administrators developed sentiments of empathy toward the people they governed. Their deferential attitudes reinforced distinctive Sudanese cultural traits North and South. So, while the British in the North admired the Arabs, the contract officers in the South empathized with the Africans and their culture; all of them even learned the local languages of the people they governed. These differences had the effect of adding to the North-South cleavage and mutual suspicion, if not contempt: "Suspensions deepened with time, and the isolation of officials in the south contributed to the widespread assumption by civilian officials in the north that they were eccentric patriarchs best left alone, an attitude which only encouraged the military men to withdraw farther into their swamps, venturing north only to pass hurriedly through the hostile and alien environment of Khartoum on their way to England for annual leave."⁵²

To the extent that these administrators symbolized the areas they administered, the mutual attitudes of distrust made the two parts of the country appear like separate entities. And apparently the degree of functional separation was considerable. The military administrators in the South, the so-called Bog Barons, were left in splendid isolation to rule with minimum interference from Khartoum, except when unusual circumstances warranted a call for some assistance or reinforcement.

The separation of the administrative setup and of the educational system, which envisaged the South more in the context of East Africa than in the national framework of the Sudan, meant that graduates from the southern intermediate schools went to Makerere College in

Uganda for higher education and the economic future of the South was contemplated in joint planning with the East African countries.

Even among the British, there were people who conceived of the future of the South differently, arguing that it would not be easy to redefine the boundary satisfactorily; that left alone, the North would almost certainly be absorbed by the Arab Middle East, especially by Egypt; that racially, the African blood from the South had been mingled with that of every northern tribe; and that the South possessed the economic potential that also existed in Uganda. They reckoned that "if the south, while remaining essentially southern, could yet become an integral part of an independent Sudan it could help to bridge the inevitable gulf between Muslim and non-Muslim, Asian and African, white or brown and black, in the Africa of the future.⁵³

Meanwhile, southern Sudan remained largely in a state of inertia, politically and economically, while the North was advancing steadily. As late as the 1940s, government schools in the South included several elementary schools, two intermediate schools, one teacher-training center, one commercial school, and one senior secondary school. The only significant development activity was the modest Azande agricultural and industrial scheme begun in 1945 for the manufacture of cloth, cooking oil, and soap from locally grown cotton. And as labor migration to the North and to urban centers was also restricted, economic activity was at a bare minimum.

Politically, however, the nationalist movement in the North and Egypt was increasingly engulfing the South, but without southern representation. Internal and external pressures led to the restoration in 1936 of Egypt's position in the Sudan, though diminished as a result of the 1919 Egyptian Revolution. Both Egyptian and internal forces were soon to effect a reversal of the southern Policy. The first step was taken by the Graduates' Congress in 1942, when it demanded from the government, among other things, the abolition of restrictions placed on trade and on travel within the Sudan, and the unification of the country's educational system. By 1943, an advisory council was formed in the North. Though it did not

legislate, it wielded much influence. The South did not participate in the council. Indeed, the possibility of its being separated from the Sudan and annexed to one of its neighbors to the south or left completely independent was still alive. In 1944, Sir Douglas Newbold, then civil secretary, addressed "the fear that ... there is hidden a secret policy to split the Sudan in two.... No such

decision has been reached. Nor is the Sudan Government empowered on its own to make such a decision.... We are not prejudging the future status of the Southern Sudanese....⁵⁴ The report of the Fabian Colonial Bureau in 1945, summed up the situation: "The problem of the South is the biggest human difficulty in the country. Educated Sudanese regarded the South as Egypt regards them. The loss of it would become a matter of prestige and to some extent of anxiety, but there is also the fear that in the South might subsequently be discovered the wealth which could guarantee the Sudan's independence. The South, like Northern Sudan to Egypt is also a source of cheap labour and servants. On all other grounds the South ought not to be united to the Arab North. In human terms it belongs to the Africa south of it."⁵⁵

In the light of the rapid changes the North was undergoing, people were becoming alive to the inequities that the government's developmental policies had inflicted on the South. But it was more than a matter of inequity; it was a case of the South's being isolated from events in the North and developing its own distinctive identity, eclectically combining its traditional characteristics with modernizing Christian and Western elements. The reaction to economic disparities with the North was more a realization of deprivation than it was a call for an integrated national development. Commenting on what he called the laissez-faire policy of the government in the South, J. Spencer Trimingham, the secretary of the Church Missionary Society, wrote that it had proved impossible in practice. "During the war years the south has been awakening. Many new points of contact have been set up between southerners and western civilisation. Those who have received education in mission schools are becoming increasingly conscious of the economic and intellectual disabilities under which they live. This awakening has brought home to the Government its moral obligation to foster their moral and material welfare so that they can play their part in modern Africa, to which end plans for very considerable future development are now (1945) being prepared."⁵⁶

UNION WITH RELUCTANT CONSENT

Northern Sudanese were aspiring toward having the South become

integrated as part of the country. But the political process they put in motion did not involve southern representation. In 1946 the governor-

general set up an administration conference to help determine steps to be taken toward the devolution of power to the Sudanese. Again the South did not participate in that consultation, although its future was determined in the meeting. When northern members demanded the fusion of the South and the North, participants were flown to the South for an impressionistic inquiry into the conditions there. They returned to recommend the unity of the South with the North beginning with the participation of the South in a legislative assembly that was to be formed.

Under pressure from Egypt and from northern Sudan, Civil Secretary Sir James Robertson decided on the policy of ultimate unity of the Sudan.⁵⁷ He argued that East Africa's plans regarding better communications with the southern Sudan had been found to be nebulous. "Our chance of succeeding depends I think upon confining ourselves to the one aim of developing trade in the South, and between the North and the South."⁵⁸ The new policy regarding southern Sudan was therefore "to act upon the facts that the peoples of the Southern Sudan are distinctly African and Negroid, but that geography and economics combine (so far as can be foreseen at the present time) to render them inextricably bound for future development to the middle-eastern and arabicized Northern Sudan...."⁵⁹

Robertson's shift in policy away from a separate South was more based on a vision of an independent Sudan within its recognized borders than it was an independent judgment that considered fully the merits of sustaining separation. The memorandum on the change of policy refers to a "1945 Despatch, which stated: "The approved policy of the Government is to act upon the fact that the people of the Southern Sudan are distinctly African and Negroid, and that our obvious duty to them is therefore to push ahead as far as we can with their economic and educational development on African and Negroid lines, and not upon the Middle Eastern Arab lines of progress which are suitable for the Northern Sudan. It is only by economic and educational development that these people can be equipped to stand up for themselves in the future, whether their lot be eventually cast with the Northern Sudan or with Eastern Africa (or partly with each)."⁶⁰

Since that was written, according to the memorandum, "great changes have taken place in the political outlook for the country as a whole. Whatever may be the final effect, inside the Sudan, of the present treaty negotiations, it is certain that the advance of the Northern

Sudan to self-government, involving the progressive reduction of British ... and public canvassing of the Southern Sudan Question, will be accelerated.⁶¹ The civil secretary was somewhat apologetic about the risk of compromising the interests of the South. "I do not suggest that the future of the two million inhabitants of the South should be influenced by appeasement of the as yet immature and ill-informed politicians of the Northern Sudan.⁶² On the assumption that the outcome of the negotiations would be a united, independent Sudan, he went on to say, "But it is the Sudanese, northern and southern, who will live their lives and direct their affairs in future generations in this country; and our efforts must therefore now be concentrated on initiating a policy which is not only sound in itself, but which can be made acceptable to, and eventually workable by patriotic and reasonable Sudanese, northern and southern alike.⁶³

The civil secretary invited comments from the British administrators in the South. When they discovered that the objective of the North, as revealed in the minutes of the administration conference, was unqualified unity, they protested against the new policy on the grounds that it was one-sided, and they suggested that a southern administrative conference be held in the South. The civil secretary agreed, and the Juba Conference was held on June 12, 1947, to seek southern views on the issue of whether and how the South should be represented in the proposed assembly.⁶⁴ Among those attending were the governors of the southern provinces; the director of establishments; seventeen southerners, including tribal chiefs and government civil servants; and six northern Sudanese.

On the first day of the conference the southerners, while conceding that the Sudan was one country, demanded a separate advisory council until such time as they could have a legislative body on equal footing with the northerners. Meanwhile they were willing to learn from the forthcoming legislative assembly in the North as observers.⁶⁵

Opening the conference the next day, the chairman "deplored the mutual suspicion which seemed to exist between Northerners and

Southerners.⁶⁶ The northerners suspected the southerners of desiring separation, and the southerners suspected the northerners of wishing to dominate the South. The chairman urged that these suspicions be dispelled to enhance the value of the talks. And indeed, the second day's meeting witnessed a change among some southerners. They had thought the matter over, they said, and had decided in favor of unity.

Not only would they go to Khartoum to observe, but they also agreed to participate fully in the legislative assembly. Sorrow Ramley, who was a participant in the “very long struggle to persuade the southerners to change their minds, later recalled that after receiving “some sort of assurance or something like that [they were] very genuine for unity. Ramley, however, confessed that the task of winning the southerners took “a complete night's work. As he explained, “We were trying to pull together the different arguments and to give assurances to those who were a bit doubtful about the future. We made the situation clear to them. And early in the morning we agreed that we should not talk in the meeting that day and that we should just announce that we had reached agreement and that was all.⁶⁷

One of the most influential personalities was the highly regarded Muhammad Saleh al-Shingetti, the judge of the High Court, who would later become the speaker of Parliament. Shingetti was apparently a key element in the “complete night's work referred to by Sorrow Ramley, which antagonized the British administrators who were sympathetic with the South. The general suspicion — borne out by the subsequent pattern of northern corruption of southern politicians by dispensing favors including crude bribery — is that the influential members of the southern team were subjected to undue influence by the more sophisticated and unscrupulously shrewd northern representatives, whether with noble arguments for unity or through promises of improved conditions for southerners. Richard Owen, deputy governor of Bahr al-Ghazal, wrote that the about-face “of educated members (though no chiefs) who first spoke against any participation on the Legislative Assembly and later changed their minds as a result of a chat with his Honour Judge Shingetti was no bad thing, as being a first-class manifestation of their pathetic defencelessness against plausible thuggery.⁶⁸ Even Sir James Robertson, the civil secretary who favored the new policy of unity, commenting on the fateful shift in the southern position, noted, “Shingetti has been busy during the night persuading the Southern officials that Northern rates of pay would surely come to the South, if they agreed to come in with the North. This apparently persuaded Clement Mboro and others that it would be better for them if the country were administered as

one area.⁶⁹

Mboro, an administrator who later became a leading figure in the southern movement, stated “that since the conference of the day before he had fundamentally changed his mind and now considered that the

best way in which the Southerners could protect themselves would be to go to Khartoum now to legislate together with the Northerners.... [I]n spite of their backwardness ... Southerners must defend themselves and speak and think for themselves.⁷⁰ James Tembura “agreed emphatically with ... Clement Mboro.⁷¹ When asked by the chairman why he had changed his mind, Tembura replied “that Judge Shingeiti had said that if they did not do so they would have no say in the future government of the Sudan, and he had thought this over very carefully the previous night after considering what had been said during the day.⁷²

Many factors were of course involved in the perspectives of the southerners, and in particular the educated members. Among these could be cited the anticolonial sentiment which they shared with the North, though in varying degrees, and the promise of promotion to a level of equality with the North, both in positions and in financial rewards. But perhaps the critical factor was the inadequacy of southern representation and lack of real comprehension of the issues involved. It is clear that the southerners did not match their northern counterparts and the British administrators, whether by education, experience, or sophistication. The southerners, being at a disadvantage, were swayed to support the joint northern-British agenda. This, rather than a meeting of minds, explains southern support of national unity.

And yet the tribal chiefs, the least educated or informed, maintained their earlier position and held back from immediate integration with the North. Chief Tete said he wanted to study in the South until he was enlightened enough to go to the North, for one could not begin to do work one did not understand. Chiefs Lolik and Chier Rian confirmed that the day before, they had spoken for their people and could not change their minds then.

In the end, the view for joining the North prevailed, but all the southerners and the southern British administrators agreed on the inclusion of protective provisions for the South. The conference later recommended inserting in the Executive and Legislative Assembly Ordinance a clause to safeguard the interest of the South. The first draft of the ordinance was later to empower the governor-general to suspend the application of any

law to the South, or to specify conditions for its application. This clause was later omitted from the ordinance since the governor-general was empowered to veto the decisions of the assembly, a provision that was believed to cover the need for the protection

of the South. It was obvious from the start, however, that northerners were against any protective provisions, since that would imply modification or qualification of full unity, to which they were committed.

In opting for closer ties with the North at that stage, the southerners were relying on the colonial government to protect them from possible northern domination. When Governor Owen asked Clement Mboro “what his safeguard would be if in spite of the Southern objections in the Legislative Assembly a law was passed which was against the interests of the southerners, he replied that “the Government would protect them.⁷³ The same men who had sided with the North were later to be the leaders of the southern political struggle, which means that what they had opted for and what eventually occurred were different.

One of the major recurrent themes in the history of North-South relations is that moments of agreement and disagreement, of unity and separatist sentiments, of peace and violent rebellion have consistently paralleled promises of equality and recognition of diversity that have been made and then broken. The Juba Conference was the first occasion for what would become a pattern resulting in an almost total loss of confidence on the part of the South; this pattern is now one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome. As Mansour Khalid observed about the Juba Conference, the demands of the South “were in fact later ignored, and many of the fears of the Southerners were to be proven justified....⁷⁴ So much were southerners perceived as inconsequential, or at best merely supportive to the northern struggle for independence, that northern politicians remained totally ignorant or heedless of southern aspirations and fears; it would be only a matter of time before southern reaction would strike a debilitating blow at Sudanese nationalism and the value of independence. It is no surprise that the southern revolt first broke out in 1955 in the area of the Azande cotton project, where development activity, modest as it was, had begun to open the eyes of the southerners to the dangers of the impending independence. As Khalid put it, “The north may have won a battle at Juba, but certainly not the war.⁷⁵

The period between the formulation of the New Southern Policy and the

signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement for Sudanese self-determination in 1953 witnessed striking progress in the South. In particular, education expanded considerably. And the government lifted the barriers between the North and the South, permitting migration in

search of employment in the North. Meanwhile, the British thought they still had time to think things over. As late as 1949 and even in 1950, the Sudan government still felt that any demand for self-government in the near future was premature. Even as late as February 20, 1952, the foreign office informed the civil secretary: "It is not His Majesty's Government's policy that the Sudan should be prepared for self-determination by 1953. The civil secretary directed, "We must play for time, while one of his colleagues stated that "the job of the British in this country is to delay the day of self-government as long as possible without alienating those Sudanese whose co-operation we cannot afford to lose.⁷⁶

Things of course developed much more rapidly than predicted. Only two years after the legislative assembly opened in December 1948, the Constitutional Amendment Commission was set up to examine the situation and recommend steps to be taken in preparation for self-government. With the signing of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement in 1953, southern political consciousness was aroused, and the movement for southern recognition began to take organized form. The gist of this movement was that the South had not been accorded its due share in the decision processes leading to self-determination; that the constitutional arrangements envisaged for the independent Sudan did not give due recognition to the southern identity; that under the unitary system, the South would be politically subordinated to and dominated by the North; and that unity with the North was only possible under a diversified system of government. As Tim Niblock observed,

From 1946, therefore, the Condominium government was committed to integrating the South into a unitary Sudan. Although the South could not now be deprived of that distinct cultural identity which had been safeguarded and fostered by earlier policies, the emphasis was placed on conditioning southerners to increased contacts with northerners, drawing the South into national political institutions, and making southern education compatible with the educational systems established in the North. With less than seven years before southerners had to cope with the politics of national self-determination, however, it was too late. The

possibility of gradual acculturation which could have drawn southerners into the national community, while enabling them to retain local customs and identities, had long since passed.⁷⁷

With the unrelenting development toward an independent united Sudan, one incident after another intensified southern fear of domination by the North — the disparaging attitude of northern officials toward the southerners; the discrediting propaganda of northern political parties against one another in their scramble for southern votes; the alienating strategies by which the government sought to intimidate southerners into passivity by transferring northern military officers to the South and attempting to move southern soldiers to the North; and above all, the announcement that 800 posts previously held by the colonial powers would now be occupied by the Sudanese, but only eight would be southerners. This series of incidents fanned southern opposition until a violent revolt erupted on August 18, 1955. The revolt started as a mutiny by a regiment in Torit district, but soon spread throughout Equatoria province, becoming a general uprising in which several hundred northerners were killed.

Northern troops were dispatched to the South by British Royal Air Force planes. The prime minister of the newly formed transitional government called for unconditional surrender and sought to use the influence of the British governor-general, who was only a nominal head, but still symbolized British protection in the minds of the southerners. Southern troops wanted their British officers to return. They requested the colonial government in Kenya to intervene as a mediator after they had refused the prime minister's order to surrender. The British authorities in Kenya rejected their request and called on the southern troops to surrender as commanded.

The governor-general of the Sudan, Sir Knox Helm, returned to Khartoum from his leave and wired a message to the southern troops in Torit supporting the prime minister in ordering surrender, but with guarantees for a full and fair investigation.

I am most deeply shocked by your mutiny. When I visited Torit last May I was very pleased with the spirit and efficiency of the Southern Corps. I never thought that three months later you would bring shame and disgrace on the name of the Southern Corps by breaking the oath which

each of you has taken to serve me truly and faithfully and to obey lawful orders of your superior Officers. As Supreme Commander of the Sudan Defence Force I now order you to obey this direct order from me and by facing like men the consequences of your acts you will help to stop further

bloodshed and to reduce the disgrace of your mutiny. The Prime Minister of the Sudan has told you what surrender means. He has also given you his personal word about a full and fair investigation and about your treatment as military prisoners if you surrender. I myself now give you the same assurance. If you are ready to obey my order fully and without question I will send Mr. Luce, who is my Advisor and who was Deputy Governor of Equatoria in 1950 and 1951, as my personal representative to Torit to tell you the detailed arrangements for your surrender. You must acknowledge this message immediately and send me your reply within twenty-four hours.⁷⁸

This powerful and, indeed, overpowering message was received and responded to within a psychological framework of regard for British justice and sense of fairness. The governor-general's personal intervention, together with the efforts of southern parliamentarians, brought an end to the revolt, and many soldiers surrendered their arms. But British authority was rapidly exiting. The southerners did not fully understand that fact, even at that late hour. This lack of appreciation for the situation was obviously mutual, for the British either chose to ignore southern concerns or did not fully realize what was at stake.

In the appraisal of a southern scholar, "The British officials in Khartoum even at this time could not understand the tension between the North and the South and acted on the assumption that the southern troops had 'mutinied' against the 'legitimate authority' of the Northern government.⁷⁹ In his view, the governor-general "trusted the Northerners to behave in a civilized manner in an attempt to cultivate the confidence of the Southerners. The British were prepared, at any rate, to leave the Sudan having handed political power to the North.⁸⁰

The southern troops responded to the governor-general's message, contending that they had not mutinied and requesting an evacuation of northern troops from Juba or supervision of their surrender by British troops. Ironically even Egypt tried to persuade Britain that they jointly send troops to the South, which would have derailed the independence process.⁸¹ The governor-general firmly rejected intervention by British

troops and assured the southerners that the northern troops, although they would not be evacuated from Juba, would do no harm to the southerners.⁸²

The southern troops eventually surrendered in deference to the

governor-general. "But when the Northern troops entered the town of Torit ... they found no more than four soldiers, including the one who had acted throughout the period as their spokesman. Most of the Southern troops did not trust the Northern troops and fled the town into the bush and stayed in hiding. Many others, seeing the Northern reinforcements and having no hope of British help, went into exile in the then British East Africa, where they surrendered their weapons.⁸³

As K. D. D. Henderson observed, "Mutineers and civilians alike ... disappeared into the bush, ... to prolong a Mau Mau existence.⁸⁴ And while 261 northerners lost their lives in the tragic disturbances, many more southerners died in the reign of terror that followed and in which the government engaged in "a violent and brutal campaign of repression that was to last for seventeen years.⁸⁵ The result was that a mutiny that had been confined to one province sparked a civil discontent throughout the South and fanned the flames of southern nationalism as an anti-North movement.

Southern politicians and intellectuals who have written about the disturbances are very critical of the British reaction. Bona Malwal, a leading southern politician and journalist, has argued that southerners naively trusted the British.⁸⁶ Dunstan Wai condemned the British for failing to understand that "what occurred, in the eyes of the South, was not a mutiny but a responsible nationalist reassertion of Africanism over Arab hegemony in the South.⁸⁷ The result of southern and British misunderstandings was the occupation of the South by northern troops, increased repression, and a full-scale civil war.

British postcolonial recollections and evaluation of their record of accomplishments in the Sudan are generally glowing, but they remain ambivalent and even remorseful about their southern policy. They are also critical of the disparity in economic and social development that was allowed to develop over the period of colonial rule and then ignored in favor of a unity that was bound to be disadvantageous to the South. Paul Howell, who had served in the South, observed that "one of the biggest [British] errors was to have a Southern Policy which not only led to a

scandalous lack of investment in development and education in the south, but was really incompatible with the aims of a unitary state. This was, ultimately, a burden which had to be carried by the northern Sudanese no less than the southern.⁸⁸ But, Howell added, "It is nonetheless difficult to see how the British could have adopted a policy of total integration without running the risk of ad-

versely affecting southern interest.⁸⁹ The same point was made by Anthony W. M. Disney, who wrote that British slowness in developing the South “must be viewed against the background of all the evils of exploitation of the south by the north — especially in the matter of the slave trade of the previous century, which probably made us ‘over-protective.’⁹⁰ Gawain Bell concludes with an acknowledgement of failure on the part of the British: “The fact is that the government failed to solve the problem. And I think it failed to solve the problem because it didn’t appreciate early enough that independence would come as soon as it did. What ought to have been done, I think, was that in the twenties there should have been much more cultural, educational, and administrative interchange between the north and the south. Not that ... the south should have become a completely Islamic area. I think that the missions should have had their opportunity; but ... [i]f the Sudan were going to become a really united country, then I think steps should have been taken to integrate the two parts of the country which, after all, geographically, were not a unit.⁹¹

As K. D. D. Henderson observed, “The new Southern Policy ... was conceived at a time when men thought in terms of half centuries and centuries ... it was designed to develop the South so that it could make its own choice in the fullness of time.⁹² And according to the Commission of Enquiry into the 1955 disturbances, “Very few people could visualize in 1947 what the political developments in the Sudan would be in 1955.⁹³

The legacy of the British rule is thus a mixed bag of ambivalences and contradictions. Although the British were the first to give meaning to the unity of the Sudan, the northern Sudanese condemned their policies for deepening the North-South division and making it an obstacle to national unity. The southern Sudanese resented the policies aimed at keeping the South traditional, which, however well-motivated, relegated them to a position inferior to the North, and then lumped them together in an unqualified unitary state. When the British belatedly realized that they were about to leave, they wanted to help the South catch up with the North and even came to accept the principle of formulating programs of

accelerated development for the South. But it was too late.

PART 3 Quest for Nationhood

Chapter 4 Genesis of Divided Nationalism

Sudanese national identity springs in part from colonial domination and the struggle against it. This identity has been shaped by the extent to which nationally representative factions participated in the struggle and by the subsequent sharing of the fruits of independence. The independence movement in the Sudan went through two distinct phases, each characterized by racial, religious, and cultural tensions. The early nationalist movement for independence was led by officers of southern origin who were one or two generations removed from slavery. The later independence movement was championed almost exclusively by the North working in close collaboration with the Egyptian nationalist forces. For the South, however, independence was to prove merely a change of outside masters, with the northerners taking over from the British and defining the nation in accordance with the symbols of their Arab-Islamic identity. In the minds of southerners, this logically necessitated the continuation of the liberation struggle after independence.

The independence movement presents a complex amalgam of contradictory factors that are both indicative of the cleavages and suggestive of potential for bridging them. These factors reveal the shared antipathy against foreign rule, the lines of identity that are both divisive and potentially uniting, and the gross inequities of the system that have obstructed that potential.

EARLY NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

The roots of political consciousness and nationalist reaction to colonialism are often attributed to the introduction of Western education, transmitted through the Gordon Memorial College and the Khartoum Military School, established respectively in 1902 and 1905.¹ The effect of education is closely associated with the political influences of Egypt,

whose nationalist movement, as reflected in the Egyptian media, provided a model. The Egyptian press carried news from all parts of the world relating to the latest developments in such countries as Egypt, Turkey, and India, with correlative denunciation of "Western greed and predatory imperialist designs ... and running through all this, one main theme — the awakening of the East, the unfolding nationalist aspirations of Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, India, China."²

These educational institutions, however, facilitated nationalism in several ways: they provided the skills that made it possible for the students and graduates to read, learn, and broaden their perspectives; they brought them in close contact with their British and Egyptian rulers and their contrasting attitudes toward rule; they opened doors to employment opportunities that extended the students' horizons and raised their expectations; but perhaps the most important contribution was that they enabled the young Sudanese of varied ethnic, tribal, and social backgrounds to become acquainted, to develop common grounds, and to act together in solidarity.³

In 1918 the Graduates Club of Omdurman was formed, initially for cultural and social purposes, with little or no direct political involvement. But it formed the nucleus of a group that would soon grow in size and political consciousness. In 1919 the League of Sudanese Union was formed, comprising mostly Gordon College alumni who had been members of the Graduates Club of Omdurman. Like the Graduates Club, it initially confined its activities to social matters, including seeking opportunities for Sudanese students to study in Egypt, which was viewed as an investment for future political purposes. The league's activities, conducted secretly through a system of autonomous cells, began to include preparation of leaflets that were sometimes smuggled into Egypt, where they were printed and disseminated. The contents of these leaflets varied, but a common thread through most of them was a condemnation of colonial rule and a call for Sudanese-Egyptian cooperation against British imperialism.⁴

Indeed, the rise in the momentum of Sudanese nationalism was

intimately tied to the rising tide of Egyptian nationalism and the call for the independence of the entire Nile Valley, which envisaged the unity of Egypt and the Sudan under the Egyptian crown. Pro-Egyptian and anti-British sentiments were rising among the more radical elements, and this development forced mobilization among the pro-British and other nationalists, who did not favor unity with Egypt.

The government, too, moved actively to counter the anti-British and pro-Egyptian elements by seeking to win the confidence of the people in general and of their religious leaders in particular. Religious leaders were encouraged to send petitions supporting the government and condemning Egyptian aspirations for the Sudan. In July 1919 a delegation of prominent religious and tribal leaders was sent to England to congratulate the king on the Allies' victory in the war. Among them were Ali al-Mirghani, Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, and Sherif Yussuf al-Hindi, the top three sectarian leaders. Once in England, they assured the British government of their loyalty and their opposition to the Egyptian ambitions for the Sudan. In this instance, nationalism was seen to prevail over the bonds of the universal Islam or Arabism.

In 1922 the governor-general received two letters, one from a group of prominent tribal leaders and another from members of the 1919 delegation to England. In the first the tribal leaders praised the British for the benefits they had bestowed on the Sudan and rejected any notions of unity with Egypt. "If the British government intends to grant to Egypt its independence and wishes to include us also under the terms of that independence, please let us know because we firmly believe that our interests, the interests of our country and our rights and conditions in general differ vastly from those of Egypt and we should like to be prepared to safeguard these interests in the event of your wishing to leave the matter in the hands of the Egyptians."⁵

The second was even more laudatory to the government: "All natives of the Sudan are conscious of the benefits conferred by the British government upon the Sudan, and desire that government to continue her work of developing the Sudan, of guiding her and of assisting her along the path of national progress, until she reach the standing which she hopes for among the cultivated nations of the world."⁶ Numerous other letters of support were received from individuals and provincial tribal leaders.

The League of Sudanese Union was short lived, partly because its activities were closely watched and curtailed by the government. The

principal cause of its disarray, however, was thought to be internal differences among its leaders on matters of strategy or tactics. One of the factors in these differences was the British unilateral declaration of Egyptian independence in 1922, which left unresolved the future status of the Sudan. While Egyptian nationalists opposed the British move, insisting on the clarification of the Sudanese situation and the recogni-

tions of the Egyptian monarch as king of Egypt and the Sudan, Sudanese nationalists saw the declaration as a victory for Egypt. Some Sudanese who collaborated with Egypt against the British supported the ambitions of the Egyptian nationalists for the Sudan. The British strongly resisted these ambitions, mobilizing cooperation with the traditional religious and tribal leaders as counterforces to the secular intellectual nationalists. The league became divided, with some members preferring a political approach that was more openly confrontational, while others favored the continuation of the clandestine operation. Obeid Haq al-Amin, "its undoubted leader" and "the more radical member, dissatisfied with the mere war of words, left to join Ali Abd al-Latif ... [as co-founder of] the White Flag League."⁷

The role of Ali Abd al-Latif, an officer of southern origin, in the nationalist movement within the northern framework, is one of the outstanding anomalies of the Sudan's identity dynamics. Born in Egypt around 1899 of ex-slave Dinka parents, Ali Abd al-Latif studied at Gordon College and Khartoum Military School, graduating from the latter in 1914 as a second lieutenant.⁸ In 1921, while serving in Wad Madani, he formed the Sudan United Tribes Society. This group favored the establishment of an independent Sudan with tribal and religious leaders as its rulers. Presumably because this move would have reversed the process of Arabization-Islamization with Egyptian connections, it appeared to have been repressed, and very little information exists on its activities. Perhaps for the same reason that the group has been obscured, deliberately or inadvertently it is considered "doubtful whether it existed at all beyond a small number of Ali's associates in Madani. In any case, it was a short-lived endeavour."⁹

Ali Abd al-Latif had become politically "disillusioned with the Sudan Government" after "a number of disappointments."¹⁰ He "had been dismissed from the Army following a personal clash with an English officer, who, he felt, had treated him arrogantly... ." ¹¹ In 1922, he wrote an article entitled "The Claims of the Sudanese Nation," which he sent to the editor of the newspaper *Hadarat al Sudan* (Sudanese civilization). In the article he expressed a number of grievances against British colonial

rule and called for self-determination.¹² Although the article was never published, Ali Abd al-Latif was tried, convicted, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment.¹³ When he was released a year later, he had become a national celebrity. "If there is such a thing as a turning point in history this was one in the development of Sudanese

nationalism.”¹⁴ Ali Abd al-Latif is widely recognized in the Sudan as the prototype of the modern secular nationalist leader.

In May 1923, Ali Abd al-Latif and Obeid Haq al-Amin formed the White Flag League, which was more militant than its predecessor, the League of Sudanese Union, and aimed at broadening its popular base through modern techniques of political organization and agitation. The league claimed to be first and foremost a Sudanese society in the broadest sense of the word. Its declared goal was to liberate the country from the slavery of colonialism, and it saw the attainment of this goal through the unity of an independent Nile Valley state, which implied uniting Egypt and the Sudan. The movement's foreign policy perspective was to inform the civilized world about its demands and to raise the voice of the nation in every forum.

A few days before the formation of the White Flag League, Ali Abd al-Latif and several colleagues in the movement sent a telegram to the governor-general, protesting the fact that the Sudanese people had been excluded from the forthcoming negotiations between the condominium partners during which the Sudan question would be discussed. The telegram read: “Our dignity will not permit us to be bought and sold like animals who have no say in their disposal. We protest with all our strength against our people not being given the right, which is theirs by law, of expressing their opinion openly and of sending their representatives, selected by the Nation, in order that they may at least be aware of the decision taken in the coming negotiations in regard to their future. They alone are entitled to decide their fate, because this decision lies with the Nation and it is hers by right.”¹⁵

The league's identification of the Sudan with Egypt was based on political rather than on racial considerations. To those political parties in the northern Sudan that had advocated unification with Egypt, the unity of the Nile Valley was a matter of political expediency. But they also recognized common elements between the northern Sudan and other countries in the Arab world: namely, the Arabic language and Islam. They also realized that Egypt enjoyed a special position in the Arab world. “In

addition to the two factors of religion and language, those of history, geography, the Nile, intermarriage and migration provided the basis on which the special relationship rested. Even those who opposed the unity of the Nile valley did not deny these factors.”¹⁶

The White Flag League collected petitions of loyalty to Egypt, and several members of the league were sent to Egypt to present them to

the Egyptian authorities. The delegation was intercepted in Wadi Halfa and sent back to Khartoum, where its arrival triggered the first political demonstrations in the country. Ali Abd al-Latif was once more arrested, tried, and sentenced, this time to three years' imprisonment. This induced the cadets of the military college to join the growing waves of demonstrations. More than fifty cadets were arrested and sent to prison, where further demonstrations and a prisoners' mutiny took place. Members of the league soon "spread the news and the spirit of insurrection throughout the Sudan, as far as Talodi and al-Fashir in the West and Wau and Malakal in the South. The fact that a number of clerks and military officers had been posted to these distant places 'on account of disloyalty' only served to spread anti-Government feeling and propaganda."¹⁷

In the meantime, relations between the condominium parties were deteriorating rapidly. On November 19, 1924, Sir Lee Stack, the governor-general of the Sudan, who was also the Sirdar [commander] of the Egyptian army was assassinated in Cairo by Egyptian nationalists. The British responded immediately by evacuating all Egyptian troops from the Sudan. Disturbances broke out in many parts of the country. More specifically, while the Egyptian troops were being evacuated, Sudanese units in Khartoum stood in solidarity with their withdrawing Egyptian colleagues and refused to obey orders of their British officers. They were eventually put down by force, with heavy loss of life. The Sudan was thenceforth fully under the control of Britain, with Egypt losing all effective participation in the government of the country.

This early phase of Sudanese nationalism is remarkable because it represents a mixture of interracial unity and integration in the process of nation building on the one hand, and racial and ethnic cleavages, stratification, and discrimination on the other hand. Whenever northern Sudanese speak of nationalism, they nearly always evoke the name of Ali Abd al-Latif and his Dinka (and less often Dinka-Nuba) identity to show how southerners were among the original leaders of the nationalist movement. By the same token, the recurrent emphasis on his Dinka — southern — identity unwittingly reveals the significance of his

background, which made his leadership anathema in the eyes of the North. It also underscores, though this is not often recognized, the role the British played first in offering military opportunities to former slaves and then in reversing that policy, thereby reinforcing among

northerners the old view of the African as inferior to the Arabs of the North.¹⁸

This racial distinction was carried into official policy by the British at this point and for some time to come. They distinguished between the Sudanese, by which they meant racial Africans or non-Arabs, and the Arabs, which included those who identified themselves as Arab, notwithstanding their African-Arab mixture.¹⁹ Factional interests, regional and tribal, surfaced within the army from time to time, and the league itself was affected by them. "According to an intelligence report in 1924, parallel to the White Flag League existed a Black Flag League consisting of black officers in the army who, being black, did not fully trust their Arab colleagues and looked upon themselves as the national inheritors of authority... Differences between the Arabs and the blacks undermined the army and civilian organizations of the revolutionary movement."²⁰

In each case of factionalism and infighting, the foreign rulers were the winners and both sides of Sudanese nationalism the losers. Since the British mistrusted the Muslim Arabs of the North following the reconquest, they recruited the non-Arab southerners in the army to contain the potentially rebellious Muslim-Arab nationalists. After the uprising of 1924 the British saw these troops as disloyal, and they were thrown back into the abyss of their denigrated identity and preserved in their backwardness.

Ali Abd al-Latif belonged to a class of individuals whose forebears had been slaves, some of whom had served in the Turko-Egyptian and Anglo-Egyptian armies. When members of this class retired, most of them settled in the larger towns and cities such as Omdurman, al-Obeid, and Medani. Added to this group were a large number of slaves who had been freed at the turn of the century. Together "they constituted a social group which had been severed from its ethnic sources for decades."²¹ Among their ranks were found such independence leaders as Abd al-Fadil al-Mas and Zein al-Abdin Abd al-Tam. They were also Dinka, though their adopted Arab-Islamic names sought to conceal their racial origins. That this northern community, descended from slaves, produced

leaders of national prominence highlights the contradictions of a state, racially pluralistic and socially disparate, emerging from colonialism into independence. The social stigma attached to this class was accentuated by the fact that the British “decided not to implement a hasty anti-slavery policy. Under the governor-

generalship of Sir Reginald Wingate in the years 1899–1916, slavery — though not officially recognized — was nevertheless tolerated. Slaves, now officially known as ‘servants,’ were encouraged to stay with their masters since it was generally believed that runaway slaves only increased the population of criminals or prostitutes... . The end of slavery was therefore a gradual process... .”²²

In the wake of the 1924 uprising, the officers of Dinka origin provided an important connection between the soldiers on active duty and the town population, not only in the cities but also in the provinces extending to the south. Officers in two southern towns, Wau and Malakal, organized demonstrations. In the Wau demonstration, Sudanese and Egyptian officers paraded their troops through the town shouting slogans against the British and in favor of Egypt. Zein al-Abdin Abd al-Tam, one of the Dinka founding members of the White Flag League, was among the officers who organized the demonstrations. The Malakal demonstrations, which followed the Wau demonstration within less than a month, were considered to be so serious that the governor of the province requested a detachment of British troops to restore order. These demonstrations preceded those that took place in al-Obeid, Medani, Kassala, and Taladi (organized by Zein al-Abdin Abd al-Tam, who had been transferred from Wau after the demonstrations there). All these culminated in the Khartoum mutiny accompanying the evacuation of the Egyptian troops.

While the initial resistance to British conquest had primarily subsided in the North, and opposition to colonialism was being revived through this more deliberate movement for independence in concert with Egyptian nationalists, southerners, in particular the Nilotics, were still resisting colonial conquest. It is reasonable to assume that this resistance had a catalytic effect on the young nationalists, especially those whose ethnic origins were southern. It is easy to see why a movement generated and led by this class of slave descendants initially called for the independence of the country under the leadership of tribal and religious leaders.

Ironically by focusing on the tribal dimension, southerners developed a

nationalist vision that was egalitarian and encompassing. By the same token, however, it must have been antithetical to the dominant Arab elements of the North. Indeed, even though the early nationalists later shifted their focus to promote a secular concept that transcended the tribal context and tactically embraced unification of

the Nile Valley, the dominant Arab elements viewed this class of leaders as unworthy. When the 1924 uprising was crushed, and the British attitude toward the Blacks reversed itself to one of open hostility, northern prejudices based on race and resentment were unleashed.

A special committee set up to investigate the 1924 disturbances described Ali Abd al-Latif as “a young savage ... who found himself a military cadet in his teens and at the age of twenty-two became a commissioned officer, and so was translated at a bound from the dregs to the cream of local society.”²³ Mansour Khalid observes: “The British did not disguise their anger at this ‘betrayal’ by non-Arab officers... . And though the racist overtones in the report of a disgruntled British investigator are comprehensible, those of the northern notables are not. For example, *Hadarat al Sudan* newspaper in its comments on the 1924 incidents called on the British to ‘exterminate those wayward street boys’ and went on to ask, ‘what a lowly nation is this that is now being led by people of the ilk of Ali al-Latif. From what ancestry did this man descend to merit such fame? And to what tribe does he belong?’”²⁴ As *Hadarat* was owned by al-Mirghani and al-Mahdi, the article must have reflected their own thinking; at least it did not conflict with it.

There is a strong belief in the South that the effect of the 1924 uprising was to alienate the British from the southerners and in particular the Dinka, whose image suffered the double jeopardy of resistance in the South and the nationalist movement they triggered throughout the country. As a result the government neglected them, especially in the field of education and socioeconomic development. Abd al-Rahman Souley, for instance, a southern Muslim who was the leader of the Liberal party of the South, contended that after the 1924 incidents, the British began to believe Arab claims that “if they had not given the ‘slaves’ preference, and had taught their [Arab] children instead, their children would not have revolted against the British.”²⁵

But the uprisings also affected the spread of education in the North, where, during the decade following 1924, “not a single school was opened.”²⁶ Indeed, the attitude of the British toward the educated class,

the engine of modernization, was openly hostile. Some years earlier the governor of Barbar province had warned the administration of the danger of “creating an educated and, almost by definition, dissatisfied class of Sudanese people.” Echoing this point, the director of intelligence wrote: “It must be recognized ... that there is now in the Sudan a class, small but vocal and inevitably possessing influence out of all

proportion to its numbers, which has ideas and aspirations whose growth has been 'forced' so that they are now at a stage, the attainment of which would have taken a generation of more normal growth. Forced growth from shallow roots ... cannot result in a healthy plant... ."27

A significant outcome of the 1924 events was that it moved the government to reorganize the army on a regional basis, which later proved an obstacle to an integrated national security system. Steps in this direction had already been taken with the formation of the Equatorial Corps, the Eastern Arab Corps, and the Western Arab Corps.²⁸ The Equatorial Corps was recruited from the southern, mostly non-Nilotic, tribes for service in the South; the Eastern Arab Corps was formed from a unit that the Italians surrendered to the Sudan when they handed back Kassala near the end of World War II; and the Western Arab Corps was formed after the occupation of Darfur. A new organization—the Sudan Defense Force — came into existence on January 17, 1925, organized on a regional basis. The country was divided into six regions, each with its special corps, and a highly mobile force was created that had the characteristics of a military police force more than those of a regular army. The force owed its allegiance to the governor-general. But many of the officers were part of the Egyptian army who had already taken an oath of loyalty to the king of Egypt. The dilemma was solved when the mufti, Sheikh Ismail al-Azhar, suggested that the officers could dissolve one of the oaths — in this case the one to the king of Egypt — by feeding and clothing ten needy persons, or by a three-day fast. The board of Ulema refused to support this advice, but the oath of allegiance to the governor-general was nevertheless taken, leaving the issue a subject of heated discussions and debates among the officers for a long time.²⁹

Although this early period of the nationalist movement is often overlooked, it has a symbolic significance in several respects. First, it shows the positive dynamics of identification, its flexibility and malleability. The descendants of slaves became assimilated into the Arab-Islamic culture and even assumed the leadership of the first nationalist movement in the country. Second, and on the negative side, this assimilation asymmetrically favored Arab-Islamic identity and

discriminated on racial and cultural grounds.³⁰ Nonetheless, neither Islamization nor the cultural assimilation into the Arab framework provided these blacks with a basis of social equality. Although their skin color would not

have differed much from that of many northerners, who were the products of Arab-African mixtures, they were viewed as racially different and inferior. A third, more optimistic lesson is that a large number of the people in what is now the Arab-Islamic North are the progeny of these Blacks to whom time and the liberal processes of assimilation have been more hospitable and generous. Seen in the historical perspective in which the races, the cultures, and the religions of the region have mixed, the role of this group, historical and potential, must not be underestimated. And yet, judging from the situation, the pattern of assimilation so far appears to have favored a stratified system in which the Arab-Islamic elements have predominated racially culturally and religiously. The non-Arabs in the North have been a silent lot, though they probably are a majority even without the South. But perhaps even more significant in practical terms was the fact that the 1924 revolt made the British resolve to separate the South from the North administratively and to deny access to education and development for the Nilotics, in particular the Dinka.

THE FLEDGLING INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

With the South out of favor and its educational and developmental opportunities restricted, the North led the next phase of the national movement and stamped it with its own distinctive character. The movement that eventually steered the country toward independence should not, however, be seen in fragments, but rather as a sequence of reactions to alien rule. The question is: Who was perceived as a foreigner? Certainly, Britain was foreign to the Sudanese, but the separation policy that reinforced historical animosities led to a sense of alienation that made northerners and southerners see each other as foreigners.

The period immediately following the 1924 events was one in which the oppressive response of the government forced the nationalists to lie low while the government intensified its policy of neutralizing Egyptian influence in the Sudan, deepening the separation of the North and the South and strengthening tribal structures and institutions.³¹ These events gave impetus to the policy of indirect rule. In language that was

later used almost identically by northern administrators against the educated southerners, a British administrator said

in advocating cooperation with the tribal leaders: "It is ... our business to strengthen the solid elements in the country, sheikhs, merchants, etc., before the irresponsible body of half-educated officials, students and town riff-raff takes control of the public mind."³² The policy sought to administer the rural areas through tribal leaders and institutions by strengthening the chiefs' traditional role as judges in both criminal and civil cases. A 1926 report stated this would permit the government "not only to strengthen the fabric of native organization but, while maintaining ... supervisory staff at proper strength, gradually to reduce the number of sub-mamurs, clerks, accountants and similar bureaucratic adjuncts in the out-districts."³³

Cultivating sectarian leaders had already been advocated by Sir Lee Stack in 1919 as part of the government policy to separate Sudanese nationalism from its Egyptian counterpart and also to win the loyalty of the Sudanese to British rule. A memorandum on the subject provides an insight into the rapprochement between the religious leaders and the government:

al Mirghani, al Hindi and 'Abd al Rahman Mohamed Ahmed [meaning al Mahdi] expressed, in the course of informal conversations, "a keen desire that the Government should take a stronger line than is taken at present to emphasize the fact that the Sudan is under the British Empire and that its future is identified with British Control." The leaders also asked "to be allowed to institute among their followers a kind of propaganda which will endeavour to foster loyalty and cooperation with the British imperial idea, with the ultimate object of cultivating a spirit of national unity among the Sudanese." Stack noted further that there was no trace of pan-Islamic tendency in the line of argument of the three religious leaders and pleaded with the British Government for their support, first because this line of policy would achieve separation from Egypt, and second because it would help create a "national idea" amongst the Sudanese. Stack was obviously aware of the ulterior motives of those leaders: "they are naturally anxious to increase their own influence in the country they fully appreciate the power of Great Britain as exhibited in the victorious conclusion of the war, and see their best hope lies in identifying

themselves with British domination.”³⁴

Being in a phase of transition meant that the forces of both tradition and modernity stood on insecure ground. At this stage, Islam and Ar-

abism were predominant factors on both sides and were also viewed with ambivalent deference by the British. For example, when Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi proposed to visit Syria in 1930 to meet with the leaders of the Pan-Arab movement and also proposed to visit Jerusalem to attend the Islamic conference the same year, the government turned down both proposals, even though the sayyid had become the government's leading personality against the radical nationalist groups.³⁵

A critical factor in the polarization was generational in nature. Abdelwahab el-Affendi offered this analysis of the dynamics:

By that time a definite polarization was starting to take place between the nascent pan-Islamic radicalism of the rising generation and the quietism of the traditional leaders. The collaborationism of the latter came under attack from the younger militants who did not share the parochialism nor the defeatist pessimism of their elders, and could not therefore accept their justifications for cooperating with infidel usurpers. The army and the new educational institutions transformed the world view of the new generation, endowing it with a comradeship that became the nucleus of Sudanese nationalism. Their limited education was just enough to make them catch a glimpse of the vast opportunities denied to them, and made them acutely aware of the logical inconsistency and moral depravity of the collaborationism of the Islamic leaders. The recurrent themes in their interventions were the remembrance of past Islamic glory and the censure of traditional Muslim leaders who did not live up to the ideals which made that glory possible.³⁶

Another observer commented on the generational dynamics of the nationalist movement from a more secular perspective. "Graduates had a common perception of themselves as an educated and enlightened elite, leading the Sudanese population away from traditionalism into a more modern world; and their employment in the Condominium administration gave them a good knowledge of how the state worked, a belief that they could govern the state as effectively as the British, and a desire to improve their position collectively against the foreigner."³⁷ But other factors militated against their continued radicalism and fostered

compromise with the sectarian leadership. "As graduates moved up in the government service, reaching positions of responsibility and enjoying the benefits which accrued, they naturally became less inclined towards radical nationalism. While they retained

nationalist objectives, therefore, the tactics they adopted were often different from those used by younger graduates. They tended, moreover, to seek different kinds of allies within Sudanese society. What was in reality a division based on different social positions (younger graduates as 'intermediate strata,' older as 'incipient bourgeoisie') found expression as a division between old and young."³⁸

After the 1924 uprising and the suppression of its pro-Egyptian White Flag League, the graduates were divided between those members who continued their anti-British campaign underground and the more sizable, older group, whose members concluded that Egypt was increasingly irrelevant to Sudanese nationalism and who saw acceptance of British rule as advisable. But the intelligentsia could not disengage politically without alternative preoccupations to sublimate their nationalistic energies. The outlet they adopted was social and cultural activities, particularly of a literary nature. They produced patriotic romantic poems and songs in which Egypt was portrayed metaphorically as "the beloved one who had been taken away." As Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim explains, the fact "that poems should be the chosen vehicle of national feelings in an Arabic-speaking country, where poetry has traditionally played a social role not unlike that of newspapers in modern society and where almost everything of public importance, from the opening of a national bank to the celebration of the anniversary of the Prophet's birth, is greeted with a spate of poems, is by no means unusual."³⁹ But since this literary form was limited as a means of fostering a political consciousness and action, it gradually gave way to more serious discussions and study groups.

A remarkable feature of this period is that after 1924 the educated nationalist class in the North began to focus on developing a cultural sense of identity that was both introspective within the northern context and expansive to the outside world in identification with Arabism and Islam.⁴⁰ The result was the gradual evolution of a modern northern identity that was at once nationalistically Sudanese and pan — Arab-Islamic.

This group saw the failure of the White Flag League as the result of lack of knowledge and political sophistication among the leadership and the membership at large. The remedy was to cultivate the skills of learning and thinking on a wide variety of issues, cultural and political, local and international. Since the kind of education that was needed could not be provided by the government, it was privately

sought by self-education at home or by studying abroad in Egypt or other Arab countries. While knowledge of English enabled the Sudanese to read on international affairs, Arabic enabled them to rediscover their Arab-Islamic roots, to develop their national character, and to form closer links with like-minded people in Egypt and other parts of the Arab world.

Study groups mushroomed wherever former members of the League of Sudanese Union or the White Flag League got together, and although many groups vanished at the same speed with which they had appeared, some of them, notably in Omdurman and Wad Medani, survived and accomplished much in laying the foundations of the nationalist political parties.⁴¹ Their pioneering journals included *al-Sudan al-Nahda* (Sudan's Renaissance) and *al-Fajr* (Dawn). The accomplishment of this class of northern Sudanese intellectuals in fostering a modern sense of identity that was at once uniquely northern Sudanese and pan-Arab-Islamic was reflected by one of the towering literary figures of the time, Muhammed Ahmed Mahjoub, who would later also play a prominent political role, first as foreign minister and then as prime minister, in the newly independent Sudan. In a debate on the theme "Sudanese culture is independent and should be separate from Egyptian culture," Mahjoub presented a case that became "the diet on which a revitalized but distinctly Sudanese nation, firmly based on Islam, Arabic culture, and African soil, should be brought up." This nation, in his view, "would have close friendly relations with the neighboring Egyptian culture but would be independent from it, it would retain its own distinct character but learn from the culture and thought of all other nations both ancient and modern." In a subsequent publication, Mahjoub elaborated his vision: "The objective towards which the literary movement in this country should be directed is to establish an Islamic-Arabic culture supported and enriched by European thought and aimed at developing a truly national literature which derives its character and its inspiration from the character and traditions of the people of this country, its deserts and jungles, its bright skies and fertile valleys... . This movement should then be transformed from a cultural to a political movement whose final goal should be the achievement of the political, social and cultural independence of this country."⁴² Once the perspective

was consolidated, the rest would be a matter of time, opportunities, alignments, and refinements.

A not-so-sanguine viewpoint has characterized the Arab-Islamic ori-

entation of the nationalist movement as largely a resistance to Africanism. "The intelligentsia was possessed by a fear of being absorbed into non-Arab Africa, and looked to Egypt to save the Sudan from such a fate."⁴³ Next to non-Arab African identity, the educated northern Sudanese loathed tribal identity, which they considered primitive, disdainful, and obstructive to the forward march of progress. The more they distanced themselves from the tribes and traditional leadership, the more the government used indirect rule against the nationalism of the educated class. "Thus indirect rule, tribal authorities and native administration became a weapon with which the Sudan government tried to protect itself against the educated class and any possible revival of nationalism."⁴⁴ As a result, the members of the elite became separated and isolated from their national base and forced to rely on external alliances.

Although the British also tried to coopt and use the moderate elements among the educated, the fact that they too were antagonistic to the tribal leaders made it difficult for the administration to unify their front to be more effective against the radicals. The overall attitude of the educated class and its effect on the course of the nationalist movement was one of disenchantment and helplessness. Muhammad Omar Bashir wrote:

The educated class, disorganized and apathetic, looked upon native administration as a backward step, unsuited to the conditions of the country. The Sudan, in their opinion, had developed an elaborate system of administration in which a larger number of educated Sudanese participated. Native administration would transfer executive and judicial functions carried out by Sudanese administrators and magistrates to another group of Sudanese, who were not well versed in the art of a modern government or administration. It was, they felt, an attempt to put the clock back, to revive authorities which had long been dead, and would create a new group of collaborators who would unite with the religious leaders against the educated class and race for the support of the British administration. Finding themselves isolated and powerless, their organizations destroyed and revolution crushed, the educated class confined their interests to the affairs of their Graduates' Clubs and the

formation of literary societies... . From time to time the intelligentsia cast their eyes to Egypt, to many of them still the only hope for rescue... . An intelligence report in 1930

stated that 'the younger element believe that a change in the status of the Sudan can only come through Egypt and the success of Egyptian nationalism.'⁴⁵

The events of 1924 thus short-circuited a sustainable nationalist movement until 1936, when, after lengthy negotiations between the condominium partners from which the Sudanese were excluded, a new treaty reaffirmed the Anglo-Egyptian administration of the Sudan. Offended by this paternalism, educated Sudanese began to organize themselves in the Graduates General Congress, founded in 1938 to serve the public interest of the country and of the graduates, a role that the government accepted, provided the congress did not seek formal recognition as a political body or claim to represent anybody but its members.

The congress sent two notes to the government on educational problems and the needed reforms. The first asked the government to increase its subsidy to the Omdurman Mahad (Islamic Institute), to introduce modern subjects, and to appoint highly qualified teachers from al-Azhar in Egypt. The second note, critical of the limitation of educational opportunities and the content of education, presented the views of the graduates on the type of instruction the government should implement in the country. The "note suggested that education in the Sudan 'should take an Islamic oriental character and not a pagan African one.' The Arabic language and religious instruction should receive the greatest possible attention at all stages."⁴⁶ The government welcomed the note and even praised its constructive and practical approach.

Encouraged by this positive interaction with the administration, the congress submitted a memorandum to the government in 1942 that was more political in content. Among other things it expressed the hope that after the victory of the Allied Powers, the rights of the Sudanese people, especially of self-determination for the country within its geographical boundaries, would be recognized. The memorandum also called for the abolition of ordinances on "Closed Districts," the lifting of restrictions on trade and the movement of Sudanese within the country, and

cancellation of the subventions to missionary schools and the unification of syllabuses in northern and southern Sudan. In other words, the congress was calling for the abandonment of the separatist southern policy.

In an uncharacteristically insensitive written response, Civil Secre-

tary Sir Douglas Newbold dismissed the memorandum. "By the very act of submitting the memorandum ... and by its wording, the Congress [had] ... forfeited the confidence of government." It was "the duty and business of the Sudan Government alone ... to decide the pace" at which increased Sudanese participation would be allowed. Newbold stated further that the congress should "realize clearly once and for all that the government must and will insist that the Congress confine itself to the internal and domestic affairs of the Sudan and renounce any claim ... to be the mouthpiece of the whole country."⁴⁷ According to K. D. D. Henderson, "It is a great mystery to most of us, that reply of Newbold's... . [Sir James] Robertson covers the point in his book. He says it 'seems inconceivable that that man could have written that letter! I personally don't think [Newbold] did write it... . I think it was the secretary [who] was responsible."⁴⁸ Whatever the source of the letter, it stood in sharp contrast to a tenet of British rule that was generally observed: attention to Sudanese pride and dignity.

The emergence of the Graduates' Congress as a political force that was beginning to champion the national cause for independence propelled the government to move rapidly in establishing more representative institutions under its tutelage. In 1943 the government established the Advisory Council for the Northern Sudan as a representative body hoping that it would render the congress redundant. The northerners criticized the council for its exclusion of the South. In a radio broadcast, the civil secretary, speaking on behalf of the government, explained the decision to establish the council in the North: "The reasons for confining this Council to the six Northern Provinces ... are practical and not political... . We are not prejudging the future status of the Southern Sudan. It is simply that the Southern Sudanese have not yet, for historic and natural reasons, reached a degree of enlightenment and cohesion which enables them to send competent representatives to a council of this kind. Nor are there any Northern Sudanese who can fairly claim to be able conscientiously to represent the Southern peoples."⁴⁹

SECTARIAN TRADITION AND MODERNIZATION

At this stage, two seemingly contradictory trends began to emerge. On

the one hand the Graduates' Congress saw itself, rather than the

sectarian leadership, as the mouthpiece of Sudanese nationalism. On the other hand, the Congress pragmatically realized that it could not have access to the masses without the support, if not the patronage, of these same sectarian leaders. As Khalid Duran explains:

The Western-educated elite emerging in the forties quickly realized that ta'ifiya [sectarianism] was an obstacle to modern aspirations of national unity and independence. The two major fraternities were bound to march into opposite directions, as they had always done, with the one usually doing the contrary of what the other did... . With independence approaching, there seemed to emerge something like a two-party-system, but the basis was not a political one, it was religious, or rather "sectarian." People were members of one or the other party not because of their political choice, but because of having been born into one or the other of the principal Sufi fraternities... . on top of it, this bifurcation was highly personalized by two clans of charismatic religious leaders, the Mahdi family in which the ansar leadership was passed on by inheritance, and the Mirghani family in which the mantle of khatmiya leadership was transmitted from father to son. Just as Sudan's geographic life-line is determined by the two Niles (al-nilain), so its political life-line was determined by the two Monsignors or Sayyids (al-sayyidain).⁵⁰

Ismail al-Azhari, the founder of the Ashiqqa party, exemplified the determination of the educated elite to rise above sectarian divisions. Indeed, the name of his party, though couched in terms of a traditional, family-oriented concept "Sibling Brothers" — connoted "the fraternization of all Sudanese above and beyond the fetters of the Sufi orders."⁵¹ The Ashiqqa party, however, could not break the traditional sectarian bonds, and its denunciations of the two Sayyids had little lasting effect as they took place completely within the confines of the Ansar-Khatmiyya orbit.

More radical movements arose representing both secularism and Islam. Although antagonistic, they had antisectarianism as their common objective. These were the Communist party and the two brotherhoods, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Republican Brotherhood. The two

brotherhoods differed in their interpretation of the Islamic doctrine, the one being orthodox and the other liberal to the point of secularism without the word.⁵² What all three radical movements had in

common, apart from their antisectarian agenda, was a pragmatism that made them at once opposed and yet deferential to the popular religious sentiments behind the authority of the Sayyids. As Khalid Duran has argued, the iron fist of sectarianism partly accounted for the entrenchment of communism as a way out of the grip and might also explain such nonconformist ventures as the nationalist Republican party of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha and the Society of the Muslim Brothers, which eventually turned into a rightist political party. "In each case the longing for a new platform outside the traditional 'sectarian' pattern was an important motive. For quite some time all of them remained elitist. It took them decades to acquire a mass following, or even any adherents at all outside the urban areas. Among the rural majority the hold of ta'ifiya appears scarcely affected... ."53

Initially the Communist party, recognizing the limitations of penetrating the religious lines of sectarian mass support, sought to cultivate those sectors of the society and the economy that were predisposed by their situation to welcome the party's message. Their premise was that most Sudanese were loyal to sectarian or tribal leaders rather than to ideology. Not only was that true of the more backward tribes of Darfur, Kordofan, or the Red Sea Hills, but it also held with the more sophisticated social groups, which had been affected by what might be loosely defined as modernization, among them the Gezira tenants, the railway workers, and the educated class.⁵⁴

The tenants represented the only sector of agriculture in which modern methods of cultivation were practiced on a large scale. The cultivation of cash crops and the partnership with the government gave the tenants alternatives to traditional loyalties and helped create a new class of agricultural workers. The immediate objective of this class was to fight against the government, its partner, for an increased share in the profits. As the largest employer in the Sudan, controlling by far the wealthiest sector in the economy the tenants' union became one of the most pivotal pressure groups in the country.

The railway workers' union was the strongest and most militant in the

country. Its power was due in part to the importance of communications in a country of such vast dimensions and in part to the relative weakness of the industrial sector. “Moreover, the creation of the modernised railway centre at Atbara, bringing together people of different tribal and sectarian backgrounds, helped to undermine traditional loyalties and to replace them, at least partly with loyalty to the trade

union in its fight for better working conditions. Commanding the most important centre of communications, the railway workers were in a position to embarrass the authorities and to utilise their power whenever possible in order to achieve their aims.”⁵⁵

The third group, the intelligentsia, was the product of modernization through education and occupational skills. Educational institutions severed students from their traditional context and implanted in them new patterns of behavior and loyalties, defined by some “as a ‘crossbreed of strong traditionalism and romantic militancy,’” exhibiting “all the characteristics of a split personality.”⁵⁶ This group was, however, acutely conscious of its importance in a society where the bulk of the population was preliterate, loyal to traditional leaders, tribal and sectarian, and almost totally oblivious of the modern concepts of society, politics, and nation building.

The Communist party did not turn its back on this traditional sector altogether. Adjusting itself to the realities of the Sudan, the party adopted from the start a flexible attitude on ideology and religion. Specifically it did not reject Islam, but, on the contrary, argued that communism and Islam were ideological allies in the collective struggle against imperialism. Besides, both sought to apply knowledge and scientific achievement in the service of society. The party even boasted of having Muslims on its central committee who saw no conflict between their religion and their membership in the Communist party. Religious leaders responded by showing reciprocal tolerance toward communism. When the Communist party was accused of rejecting Islam and spreading anti-Islamic propaganda in October 1954, Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi came to its defense, explaining to his followers that those accusations were politically motivated.⁵⁷

The Communist party, like other reformist groups that were reacting to the conservatism of the system, “never managed to shake off the shackles of sectarianism; many of its prominent adherents continued to be attached, by temperament or tradition, to religious sects or other major political groupings. This in turn led the party to remain well within the

sphere of traditional politics, rather than, as might be expected, quite outside it. Still, the intelligentsia of the party was guided by an ideology and, in principle, played some role in the direction taken by the national political movement... .”⁵⁸ The party was never able, however, to translate its ideology into programs of social significance.

In essence, this means that although the party was aware of the conflicting religious, social, and cultural realities of the Sudanese situation, it could not ultimately compromise its ideology in favor of sectarianism: "To announce that individual religious beliefs did not contradict communism was one thing, while the admission of the central political role of Islamic sects was quite another... . In consequence, the SCP rejected the political role of the religious sects on principle while in practice it tried not to antagonize their religious leaders and at times even admitted their importance in the political realm."⁵⁹

The predicament translated more into a compromising weakness for the reformers than a threat to the traditionals. "As the graduates' movement emerged slowly from the squabbles of the 1930s and 1940s, its agenda was dictated by its weaknesses. The questions asked were not what to do, for what reasons and how? But whom to turn to for help: Egypt or Britain, Sayyid Ali al-Mirghani or Sayyid Abd al-Rahman? When the situation changed and the real questions of what to do and how to do it had to be faced, these leaders were short of answers."⁶⁰

For the family-oriented Sudanese young people, communism became a tool of political and social opposition they could use without undermining the foundations of the prevailing system. It was a form of ritualized rebellion that became essentially part of the social order. "Marxist theory appeared to the young Sudanese radicals, as it did to many others in the Third World, as a powerful tool for understanding and relating to the new world in which they found themselves. Its discovery must have been an exciting and reassuring experience, especially when advanced by men ... [who] came from the heart of the establishment that had before appeared alien, formidable, oppressive and inaccessible to the young students. Now the establishment's Achilles' heel seemed finally to have been found."⁶¹

Sudanese Marxists were an extraordinary assortment of young people of relatively privileged backgrounds from the urban middle class. The irony is that among the groups that opposed them were those from rural backgrounds who were supposed to be benefited by communism, but

whose perspective was dramatically different. First of all, within the rural context, members of this group were from a privileged background where they had not been victims of the class struggle portrayed by communism. Far from it, they were the beneficiaries of change or modernization that had taken them to the helm of the educational process. They were aware that they needed to improve

their rural lot and were grateful that they had the opportunity to do so. This group, which constituted the majority in educational institutions, remained genuinely religious in the spirit of their rural communities, and they saw communism as antireligious, socially disruptive, and generally destabilizing. Their reaction to communism became pivotal to the countermovement, with Islam as its point of departure. "Early adherents to Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood] spoke of their revulsion at the irreligiousness and moral laxity among some of their colleagues in the secondary schools and college, especially those professing communism. When asked to specify what was meant by moral laxity these members spoke of the desertion of prayer and widespread heavy drinking... ." As one observer noted, "the urban-rural divide was an important aspect of school life in those transformative years, where students of rural origins were ridiculed by their 'sophisticated' fellow-students and as a defence sought consolation in striving for academic excellence."⁶²

The radical Islamic groups, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, were even more ambivalent than the secularist communists in their attitude toward the religious sects, since they fed on the same ground. Abdelwahab el-Affendi offers a penetrating analysis of the strategies adopted by this group in the nationalist movement and the extent to which tradition persisted through the transitional phase to shape the process of modernization. The clash was between a society that was decidedly Islamic in a traditional sense and a leadership that was for modernization. "The graduates were forced into co-operation with the Sayyids, whom they were sure stood condemned by the criteria of 'true Islam' as well as by those of modernity. By the conversion of the radical graduates to the idea of 'tactical collaboration,' this type of manoeuvring became a national ethic." Sudanese politics became "an endless web of tactical alliances" that "reflected two important facts of Sudanese life: the nature of the social fabric and the ethics governing it (which favoured compromise and rejected sharp divisions), and the fact that all political actors were fighting for survival. The first element reflected the tribal basis of Sudanese society. A tribe, as a voluntary association of sovereign individuals, cannot survive if individual members become too assertive of their claims. The second element reflected the nature of the

political field of action, in which all competing groups were mainly concerned simply to establish their rights to be there.”⁶³

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Republican Brotherhood were ini-

tially of the same mold. Hasan al-Banna (a schoolteacher), the Egyptian founder of the Muslim Brothers and Mahmoud Muhammad Taha (an engineer), the founder of the Republican Brothers, had much in common. Like most of the early Muslim Brothers, they were deeply religious and committed to the Islamic frame of reference in a spiritual sense. But of course the political dimension was central to their agenda. Mahmoud Muhammad Taha not only was held in high esteem from a spiritual perspective, but also was heralded as a political hero who had led nonviolent demonstrations against the British. He was one of the first Sudanese to be imprisoned when the struggle for independence from colonial rule resumed. "As an engineer he represented the new professional class, where later most of the 'Muslim Brothers' were to come from... . His religion was no longer mere traditional orthodoxy, there were new elements to it: an intellectual response to modernization coupled with political activism." Taha was a symbol of exemplary piety who "lived the life of an ascetic, spending all his wealth on charity." He impressed the early Muslim Brothers from Egypt so much that they requested that he become their murshid (guide), an offer that he declined in favor of founding his own movement.⁶⁴ And indeed, there were profound ideological differences between the Islamic movements. As Abdullahi al-Na'im, a leading Islamic jurist and a prominent follower of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, has written, "The two main approaches to Islamization in the Sudan may be described as the fundamentalist and traditionalist approach and the modernist approach. The fundamentalist and traditionalist approach purports to resurrect the classic Islamic state of the seventh century A.D. while the modernist approach advocates the radical reform of certain aspects of Islamic Shari'a law before any practical implementation is undertaken."⁶⁵

The Muslim Brothers embraced the traditional shari'a, the orthodox law of Islam, with a political ideological twist. Ironically, their radicalism was perceived as revivalism, which meant a return to original Islam as the basis for building a modern Islamic state and society. As Khalid Duran has observed, "Shari'a, most of which had long fallen into oblivion, was turned by them into a chimerical remedy of all ills, a kind of Aladdin's

wonderlamp. Their ideologues were never able to properly define that God-given 'Islamic system,' or perhaps preferred not to do so. The myth of the panacea was all the more effective in situations of societal discomfort. The 'Muslim Brothers' proudly called

themselves salafi because of their fundamentalist notion of going back to the pious forebears [salaf].”⁶⁶

Mahmoud Muhammad Taha reinterpreted shari'a, arguing that what was appropriate for seventh-century Arabia could not be equally suited to twentieth-century conditions. He did not consider it the divine purpose to follow literally a bygone code whose moral imperatives were less than what was demanded from the contemporary generation, such as human rights and social justice. “The term salafi acquired almost a derogatory meaning in his writings, denoting something like moral unresponsiveness, a cheap and self-righteous way of circumventing God's demands on man. Consequently he called for a further development of the shari'a, the elaboration of a new shari'a in place of the shari'a salafiya. This allowed him to clearly advocate democracy and socialism.”⁶⁷

The basic premise of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha is that Islam consists of two messages. The prophet Muhammad proclaimed from Mecca that the ideals of Islam included democratic values, religious tolerance, fundamental freedoms, and equality between the sexes. This message operated for thirteen years, until it was violently and irrationally rejected by the Arabs in a way that made implementation at that time seem premature. It was then revealed to the prophet that he had to address the people according to their level of intellectual and moral capabilities. He then used the subsidiary Qur'anic and hadith texts of Medina as the basis of a revised vision of Islam that was closer to the mores of seventh-century Arab society. The message from Medina was, in the terminology of Taha, the First Message. Taha argued that now conditions were ripe for the implementation of the more tolerant and egalitarian message from Mecca.

Muslims generally acknowledge the difference between the texts of Mecca and the more authoritarian texts relating to Medina. Since the first phase of Islam was based on the Medinese texts, it was assumed that the abrogation of the earlier texts of Mecca was conclusive. The texts of Medina imposing jihad and forcible conversion, for example, were

deemed to have conclusively abrogated and denied legal efficacy to the texts of Mecca, which called for peaceful and voluntary persuasion. While the earlier texts were regarded as having religious and moral significance, the subsequent texts were the basis for the legal principles of shari'a. Mahmoud Muhammad Taha considered this reasoning to reflect a misconception of the purpose and rationale of the

abrogation, which was in the nature of a postponement and not a permanent repeal.

Mahmoud Muhammad Taha emphasized the relationship between the social aspects of religious legislation and the prevailing socioeconomic and political circumstances. As he saw it, dictates of the time might require endorsing an inferior principle, but this must be viewed as a temporary measure, or else the ideals of Islam would be permanently compromised. Taha's belief was that the inferior later principles must give way to the superior original principles under appropriate circumstances.

The implications of this reinterpretation are radical. If jihad and forced conversion were to be replaced by voluntary religious affiliation, or even the option of atheism, tolerance and respect for individual choice would have to be written into law. Also, with a legal guarantee of individual rights and freedoms comes the concept of individual responsibility, and the law itself must be based on constitutional rights of universal equality.⁶⁸ The irony is that while holding views that diverged radically from traditional Islam, Taha and his followers remained devoted to Islam and to Islamic ideals and practices from a spiritual and moral point of view.

In contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood increasingly politicized Islam, using it as an instrument of power and control. They equipped themselves with the tools of modernity to pursue their aims in a pragmatic, Machiavellian fashion virtually divorced from the spirituality of religion. Three interrelated and interdependent factors figured in the strategy of the Muslim Brothers: the pursuit of power, the reform of society in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields, and the use of religion as a potent tool for the mobilization of the community. While the Republican Brothers saw Islamic ideals as an end, the dominant faction of the Muslim Brothers believed religion to be a means to other objectives. The differences, indeed the conflicts, between the two wings of the Islamic path increased with time. They had a helping hand from the "September Laws," promulgated by President Nimeiri, which eventually resulted in the public hanging of Taha on January 18, 1985, condemned for the Islamic

crime of apostasy.⁶⁹

In retrospect, Sudanese nationalism suffered from two major events or developments. One was the exclusion of southerners from national self-determination and the other was the failure of the Republican Brothers to have had a significant effect on the political trends in the

country. With respect to the first, had southerners been more involved in the decisionmaking process leading to independence, in all likelihood they would have helped develop an arrangement that would have been more equitable in accommodating diversity within unity. Over a period of time, freedom of movement in the country and interaction between the two sets of people in an atmosphere of peace, security, and relative harmony might have fostered integration and a sense of national identity. The exclusion of southerners, especially from the final process of establishing independence, set the country on a course that was inherently inequitable and conflictual.

Likewise, had Mahmoud Muhammad Taha succeeded in establishing his version of the Islamic path as the guide to political development in the country, an atmosphere conducive to the equality of peoples and the regard for democratic principles could have encouraged a vision of the nation respected by northerners and southerners alike. Then the national sense of purpose would have been driven by the principles of Islam, albeit as liberally and tolerantly interpreted by the Republicans. This means that, in the long run, the philosophy of the Republicans might have been more successful in promoting identification with Islam than the more coercive models that operated. Depending on whether such a tolerant process of assimilation into the Islamic mold would have been a good or a bad thing for the South, the suppression of Taha's perspective meant that an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive, integrative sense of national identity was lost. Its failure, however, also helped to preserve the identity of the South as a culturally and religiously different entity.

At the time of the independence movement, these repercussions were not only unforeseen, but were decidedly overwhelmed by the northern, and to a lesser extent, southern, desire to rid the country of foreign rule. While the South remained excluded or marginal, the struggle for the North was a collective one that unified all the forces, sectarian leadership and the educated class, both secular and religious. But since the goal of independence was in sight, pragmatic maneuvers for political space and influence became dominant themes of the preindependence rivalry. All

this was largely within the framework of the North. The only concern the northern political forces had for the South was that this alienated part of the country be permitted to join in the last stages of the march toward independence. Even this did not imply demanding that southerners be represented in the process, but rather

that northerners be recognized as the legitimate representatives of the whole country, including the South. In this regard, the North was working closely with Egypt.

DIVIDED MARCH TO INDEPENDENCE

As one observer aptly noted, "The pace of progress towards Sudanese self-determination was set as much by the desire of each condominium [power] to outmaneuver the other as it was by developments within Sudan."⁷⁰

In December 1945, Egypt requested from Britain a renegotiation of the 1938 agreement that had reaffirmed the condominium status. While negotiations were under way in London, the Sudanese political parties sent a delegation to Cairo to negotiate with the Egyptians about the future of the country. The compromise reached between the unionists and the independents proposed a free and independent Sudan that would maintain some form of union with Egypt and alliance with Britain, a formula that proved unacceptable to both Egypt and the proponents of independence.

The negotiations between Britain and Egypt resulted in the 1946 draft treaty that included the infamous Sidqi-Bevin Protocol that provided for a framework of unity between Egypt and the Sudan under the common crown of Egypt. The outraged reaction of the Sudanese and the British political elite led to the immediate abandonment of the plan and a statement by the British foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, in the House of Commons on March 26, 1946, to the effect that the government considered the sole aim of its administration in the Sudan to be the welfare of the Sudanese people and that no change in the status of the Sudan should be made until the Sudanese had been consulted through constitutional channels. Differences in interpreting the terms on which the parties had agreed prompted Egypt subsequently to take its case to the United Nations Security Council, requesting the complete evacuation of the British troops from the Sudan and the termination of the condominium regime. The council could not reach a decision, so the matter was shelved and left unresolved.

Also in 1946, the government convened the Sudan Administrative Conference to plan further constitutional changes. The idea of the unity of the country, North and South, was presented and confronted

for the first time at that conference. Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub recalled that he asked James Robertson, the civil secretary, to consider the two parts of the country as one when discussing the political development of the Sudan. Robertson replied that, under his terms of reference, he could not consider the future of the North and the South at one and the same time. After adjourning the conference to refer the matter to the governor-general, Robertson came back to tell the conference that he had received the green light to consider the future of North and South together.⁷¹

The future of southern Sudan was thereby determined without southern representation. As already explained, the Juba Conference of 1947 was an opportunity for the more experienced northern politicians to induce the selected few southerners to rubber-stamp the decisions that had already been reached. Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub testified, "It was the first political forum bringing together Northerners and Southerners to discuss their political destiny. Thanks to the advocacy of Clement Mboro and others, the Southerners accepted the idea of a single Legislative Assembly for the whole country."⁷²

The legislative assembly met in December 1948 and within the same month passed a motion expressing the opinion that the Sudan had reached a stage at which self-government could be granted. It therefore requested the governor-general to approach the condominium powers to make a joint declaration to that effect before the third session of the assembly. In March 1951 the governor-general appointed a constitution amendment commission under the chairmanship of Justice Stanley-Baker to recommend the next steps to be taken in the constitutional advance to self-government.

Both Britain and the governor-general rejected the unilateral decision of the Egyptian Wafd party government in October 1951 to abrogate the 1936 treaty and thereby claim the revival of Egypt's precondominium rights over the Sudan, with the Egyptian monarch reinstated as king of Egypt and the Sudan. The legislative assembly deplored the attempt to impose Egyptian sovereignty on the Sudan and reasserted the right of the Sudanese people to determine their destiny.

Subsequent developments signified a total disregard for all the assurances the southerners had received from the northerners at the Juba Conference. During the accelerated march to independence, "The British Civil Secretary [Sir James Robertson] was preoccupied with how to win the Northern Sudanese intelligentsia away from the Egyptian

government in the contest between the two Condominium powers... . Robertson believed that safeguards for the South were bound to drive Northern Sudanese political leaders over to Egypt which was craftily championing the Northern Sudanese case for unconditional unity of the two regions of the Sudan.”⁷³

Ibrahim Bedri presented a foresighted note to the 1951 Constitutional Amendment Committee in which he advocated special protective provisions for the South and disadvantaged regions of the North. “When I say the South I do not mean the inhabitants of the three Southern Provinces alone, but also those of the Southern Fung, Blue Nile Province, as well as some of the inhabitants of Darfur and of the Nuba Mountains of Kordofan ... all of these people neither profess Islam nor speak Arabic ... there are no traditional, religious, linguistic or cultural ties between them and the Northerners; the only tie is a territorial one which can be traced back to the Egyptian Conquest of 1820.” Recalling the bitter history of slavery to which those people had been subjected, he went on to say, “Such expressions as ‘Our brothers in the Southern part of the Valley,’ ... which are being used to demonstrate our goodwill towards people, who, until recently were raided by our fathers who enslaved them and sold them as animals ... are not sufficient to make the people of the South forget their past sufferings and change their attitude towards us and Egypt, simply because we have secured their freedom in the constitution.” With exceptional moral courage and integrity, he posed a rhetorical question, “What safeguards have we made for the continuance of stability, the securing of freedom and the right of self-determination for such people, knowing that the only tie between them and us is the Egyptian conquest of the Sudan referred to above?”⁷⁴

As a result of disagreements within the committee and the resignation of some members, the governor-general dissolved the Constitutional Amendment Committee on November 26, 1951. On the basis of the minutes of the meetings up to the point of the dissolution, the chairman of the committee prepared a report containing certain principles that would be embodied in the new constitution. Among the key elements of the proposed constitution for self-government, which was to be parliamentary

in character, was a provision that would empower the governor-general to protect the interests of southerners. Another provision envisaged the creation of a special ministry for the southern provinces and a board for southern affairs, whose members

would be appointed by the minister in consultation with the governors of the three southern provinces without reference to the prime minister.

When the proposed constitution was submitted to the legislative assembly, this provision was strongly criticized by the northern members, who argued that it would weaken the position of the prime minister, not only because of the manner in which the board was to be appointed, but also because it would in effect create two separate cabinets in the country. Zein al-Abdin Abd al-Tam, an Arabized and Islamized member of southern origin, is quoted as having said that as a southerner himself, a misrepresentation of his assimilated identity, he "sympathized with the Honourable Members from the Southern provinces, but that if minority problems were created the whole structure of the state might collapse."⁷⁵ This was why he opposed the recommendation. Commenting on Abd al-Tam's statement, Mansour Khalid has observed: "As classic a statement of the attitude so often exhibited by the racially prejudiced among northern Sudanese would be hard to find, as they excel in concealing their real sentiments... .' Abd al-Tam ... can be deemed, like so many other Sudanese of markedly negroid origin, to have been compelled to take positions like that in order to out-Herod Herod. True to this tradition, many southern politicians of the period, living in Khartoum and seeking to blend in with its society, ended by betraying their own cause merely by succumbing to such subtle coercion and blackmail."⁷⁶ The resolution of this problem was that the South would be represented in the cabinet, but there would be no minister for southern affairs.

In accordance with the wishes of the governor-general, the draft Self-Government Statute provided that "the Governor General should have a special responsibility for the public service and for the Southern provinces. [He] ... would have the right to veto any bill which, in his opinion, adversely affected the contractual rights of the former or the 'special interests' of the latter."⁷⁷ Even this was eventually watered down by the legislative assembly to a provision giving the governor-general responsibility "to ensure fair and equitable treatment to all the inhabitants of the various provinces of the Sudan."

Meanwhile, the Wafd government of Egypt, which had abrogated the treaty and agreement, was dismissed by the king. A new government, with Najib al-Hilali as prime minister, took over. At the invitation of the new Egyptian prime minister, Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi,

the patron of the Umma party, sent a personal delegation to negotiate with the Egyptian government. Babo Nimir, a member of the delegation, recalled:

Sayed Abd al-Rahman sent a delegation of five persons: Shingetti, Abdel Rahman Ali Taha, Sayed Abdullahi and Ibrahim Ahmed. And he said to us: "You Arab Chiefs, elect one of you." They elected me. We became five. This was in 1952. We went to Egypt. We negotiated with them for fifteen days. They tried to persuade us to recognize the idea of a symbolic crown. In return they said they would give us a paper to put down all we wanted; they would sign it and send a copy to the United Nations in America. We said, "No!" ... [We] said to them, "As you know, we did not come with a mandate from the whole Sudan. We came representing the Umma Party and the Independents. We have not been authorized to tell you this sort of thing... . In any case, we will take your point of view to the Independents. And you now know our point of view. Maybe, there will be room for further negotiations."

Then we returned to the Sudan. The matter was discussed. Another delegation went. While they were there, the [Egyptian] coup that was led by [Mohamed] Naguib took place... .78

Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub was a member of the second delegation. He later wrote that they "hurriedly" turned the Self-Government Statute into a transitional constitution that guided the country through the transition to independence within less than four years. What remained was the formal implementation of the steps outlined in the 1953 agreement between Britain and Egypt that would guide the country through self-rule to independence. The Parliament that was elected in 1953 to determine the country's future decided on August 16 by a unanimous vote to carry out the requisite steps toward exercising the right of self-determination. On August 29 a resolution was passed for the holding of a direct plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the Sudanese people. This decision was quickly reversed. "The political parties realized that the organization of a plebiscite in a country as vast and diversified as the Sudan with its largely illiterate population, in the south especially,

would create many problems and solve none. Moreover, it would be virtually impossible to conduct a plebiscite in the south since the mutiny had caused a collapse in the security and administrative system.”⁷⁹ The people of the Sudan and especially in the

South were thus denied the right to participate directly in determining the future of their country. The southern crisis, which was a reaction to exclusion, now became a basis for an even graver exclusion from participation in the important decision of national independence.

At the critical moment of agreeing on the declaration of independence, the leaders of the nationalist movement “worked feverishly” over “the next few days.” With a tone that underscored the lack of sensitivity with which they regarded the southern concerns, Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub recorded, “We encountered some difficulty in convincing the Southerners so we inserted a special resolution to please them, pledging that the Constituent Assembly would give full consideration to the claims of Southern Sudanese Members of Parliament for a federal government for the three Southern Provinces.”⁸⁰ Whether Mahjoub and his colleagues intended to take this pledge seriously or not can only be judged from the cursory reference to it and the subsequent dismissal of the southern claim without anything near a full consideration.

The destiny of a people, indeed a nation, was thus determined by an intelligent ploy that was devoid of fundamental moral and political principles other than the shortest-term objective of connived independence, and the South naively took it at face value as sincere. “Sudan’s declaration of independence, in the words of one of its authors, was thus a take-in: a fraudulent document obtained through false pretences and subterfuge; that does no honour to the northern political establishment.”⁸¹

The crisis of legitimacy however, went beyond the southern Sudan and affected other marginalized parts of the country. As Tim Niblock observed, “To much of the population in the less developed fringe of the Sudan, then, the Sudanese state as it emerged at independence seemed a distant and alien entity, just as it did in the colonial era. The peoples of southern Sudan, and most of those in western and eastern Sudan, had little access to the benefits which the state bestowed (education, health services, remunerative government jobs, etc.)... . The state personnel who faced them ... appeared to share little of their cultural or ethnic

background.”⁸²

Several points need to be highlighted about the independence movement, especially as it applied to the South and, to a lesser extent, other peripheral regions of the country. The most important factor is that it was an elite movement spearheaded by a small group of urbane and

quite sophisticated individuals, backed by the sectarian leaders, purporting to represent mass followers who gave them blind loyalty without understanding the issues involved. This group of leaders, having benefited from their close association with the condominium rulers, had a sophisticated view of the situation at the center and on the international scene, but hardly any understanding of the larger community within the country. Furthermore, the focus of these leaders on manipulating the condominium powers and political forces in Cairo and London removed them even further from internal constituencies.⁸³

With respect to the South, the racial, cultural, and religious differences that had existed traditionally but had been augmented by the separatist policies of the British also had an aggravating effect on political alienation during this preindependence period. In particular, the view of the South as primitive and backward, which the North shared with the British, fostered in northern politicians an attitude that was condescending at best and contemptuous at worst. Given the gap between the northern and southern leaders in age, education, and political sophistication, there could hardly be a common ground for communication with mutual respect on matters of national or regional concern. It could, in fact, be argued that the global perspective of the northern leaders in their interaction with the condominium powers and the countries of the Arab world and the third world was more developed and refined than their comprehension of the internal situation, especially in the South. It is no wonder, then, that to the average southerner the new government that took over on independence was northern, Arab, and foreign and certainly did not signify southern independence, as postcolonial developments would soon confirm.

Chapter 5 Northern Dominance: Colonialism Revisited

The relationship between the North and the South, historians have argued, has essentially been one of internal colonialism, in which northern culture and religion were forcibly imposed on the southerners. Southerners did not regard any government in Khartoum as having legitimacy over them. In their view, northern rule was a transfer of colonial control from the British to the South's traditional enemies in the North. The commission of inquiry into the 1955 disturbances in the South reported, "The Northern administration in Southern Sudan is not colonial, but the great majority of Southerners unhappily regard it as such... ."1

Dunstan Wai elaborates this point: "The monopoly of political power by the North confirmed to them the beginning of a second colonial era. On the other hand, the North felt that it had the legitimate right to formulate and carry out policies which would affect the entire country. The failure of the Northern Sudanese politicians to share political power with political elites from the South continually reinforced a feeling of alienation by the South and the belief that the North was, in essence, a colonial successor to Britain. Also, attempts to coerce the South into the Northern fold worsened rather than benefited the perception of Khartoum governments as illegitimate, ultimately leading to armed rebellion."2

By all standards, successive northern Sudanese governments in Khartoum and their administrators in the South used the tools of control that they had observed applied by the British. In particular, they resorted to the ruthless suppression and repression of local resistance and the attempted assertion of law and order by crude military and police forces reminiscent of the early British administration in the South. The British saw the South as a wild frontier where only might ruled and government meant forcing the natives to submit to law and

order. This legacy became a living code in the northern outlook on the South. In many ways, the British were gentler rulers than the Sudanese administrators who took over from them at independence. During the middle and later part of the colonial administration, the British developed greater sensitivity to the local cultures and demonstrated a caring, albeit patronizing, attitude toward the southerners. In contrast, northern administrators were totally ignorant of the South and its cultures. They viewed the people condescendingly as primitive, wild, and godless. Perhaps even more important, they considered themselves duty bound to spread the message of Islam, if need be by the gun. Their mission also aimed at undoing what the British had done by removing the vestiges of Christianity and Western influence and substituting Islam, Arabism, and their related cultural patterns.

the South this meant that the true struggle for self-liberation had just begun with independence. But southern resistance was not so much to Islam or the Arab culture, which had already been accepted in certain parts of the South, especially in urban centers, as it was to the rigidity of the assimilationist policy and the forceful ruthlessness of its implementation. As a result, the country was almost inexorably plunged into extreme violence that only deepened the identity cleavages between the two parts of the country and strengthened the image of northerners as colonialists in national garb.

The Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, which halted the North-South hostilities for a decade, was a carefully crafted tactical move that sought to make the South swallow the assimilationist aspirations of the North in palatable doses. It did not represent a genuine recognition of southern identity as a model for a long-term evolution of regional or national conciliation. Its purpose became manifest in the gradual erosion of the autonomy of the South under the agreement, and was also made explicit by President Jaafar Nimeiri, the principal force behind the agreement, when he abrogated it unilaterally, triggering the return to arms.

Nimeiri's betrayal of the South — abrogating the agreement and imposing Islamic laws on the country — may have been deliberately

crafted in alliance with the Muslim fundamentalists, or it may have been a clever ploy to undermine the religious authority of the Islamist leadership that continuously eroded his authority. Nevertheless, it set the Sudan on a course that deepened the polarization of the country along religious lines and placed additional obstacles in the path of accommodation.

This chapter describes the three main elements that made the Sudan's independence a transfer of colonial control: northern attempts to dominate and forcibly assimilate the South; Nimeiri's clever ploy to pacify and then Arabize and Islamize the South; and the polarizing factor that the Islamic trend he set in motion has injected into the country's identity crisis and the dilemmas it poses.

DOMINATION AND RESISTANCE

With independence the northern governments inherited a South that was not only different from the North in its traditional systems, but had evolved along Christian and Western lines as a result of the separatist policies of the British. While the results of British policies were a hindrance to national integration, the North felt that reverse policies could be followed in favor of Islam and Arabism. The government therefore focused on exposing the separatist policies and strategies of the British and on the methods needed to reverse them according to the new goals. Even when the South was fiercely fighting a nationalist war of liberation, the northern explanation of the cause of the conflict still focused on the divisiveness of British colonial policies, the overemphasis on slavery in the southern educational curriculum, and the alleged interference of foreign elements in the internal affairs of the Sudan.³

The first step after independence was the total suppression of the southern call for federalism. In September 1956, the year of independence, the National Assembly appointed a committee to draft a national constitution. Only three of its forty-six members were southerners. When they reiterated the southern call for a federal constitution, they were hopelessly outvoted. In despair, they walked out of the constitution draft committee and boycotted the rest of its work. The North was tragically oblivious of the southern grievances.

Indeed, the southern call for a federal system of government was subsequently outlawed and rendered criminal. "By the end of 1958 Southerners either went to jail or chose a life in exile for supporting federal principles... . In only a decade since the Juba Conference, Mohamed Saleh Shingetti, who had become Speaker of the Constituent

Assembly of 1958, had already forgotten the graphic warning of Chief Lolik Lado,” that “a hurried union might result in an unhappy home,

likely to break up in a violent divorce.” By 1958 “the hurried marriage was already in trouble.”⁴ The thrust was Arabization and Islamization.

Only a year after independence, the government nationalized all missionary schools in the South while allowing private schools in the North, including Christian missionary schools, to continue. In February 1960 the council of ministers resolved that Friday instead of Sunday should be the official day of rest in the South. In protest against this action all southern schools went on strike. The government retaliated strongly. In one case a native priest, Poulino Dogali, was sentenced to twelve years' imprisonment under the 1958 Defense of the Sudan Act for having printed and distributed a leaflet critical of the government's decision. Two secondary-school students who were accused of the same offense received ten years each. On appeal, Chief Justice Abu Rannat, who was widely respected for his integrity, reasoned somewhat defensively, “Reading the leaflet as a whole, I have no doubt that its object is to incite opposition and bring discredit to the Government. One of its objects is clearly to provoke differences between Moslems and Christians. We are a secular State, and the object of the Council of Ministers' resolution of February 1960 was mere unification of working days in the whole country. The interpretation put by the authors of the leaflet is to show that the present Government is imposing Islam and fighting Christianity.”⁵

The South's fear that the government was waging war against Christianity and promoting Islam was soon reinforced by the enactment of the Missionary Societies Act of 1962, which regulated missionary activities. Section 3 of the act provided that no missionary society or any member thereof should do any missionary work in the Sudan except in accordance with the terms of a license granted by the council of ministers. Such license was to be in the prescribed form and should specify the religion, sect, or belief of the missionary society and the regions or places in which it might operate. In addition, the license might impose whatever conditions the council of ministers might think fit, either generally or in any specific case.

According to the provisions of section 6, the council of ministers might refuse to grant, renew, or even revoke a license at its discretion. Section 7 imposed spatial limitations and prohibited a missionary society from doing “any missionary act towards any person or persons professing any religion or sect or belief thereof other than that specified in its license.” Missionaries were not allowed to “practice any so-

cial activities except within the limits and in the manner laid down from time to time by regulations.” Section 8 provides: “No missionary society shall bring up in any religion or admit to any religious order, any person under the age of eighteen years without the consent of his lawful guardian. Such consent shall be reduced to writing before a person appointed for that purpose by the Province Authority.” Section 9 stated: “No missionary society shall adopt, protect, or maintain an abandoned child without the consent of the Province Authority.” Under section 10, formation of clubs, the establishment of societies, organization or social activities, collection of money, famine and flood relief, the holding of land, and the publication and distribution of papers, pamphlets, or books were subject to ministerial regulations.⁶

In March 1964 the Sudan government took the final step of expelling all foreign missionaries from the southern Sudan. “Foreign Missionary organizations have gone beyond the limits of their sacred mission... . They ... exploited the name of religion to impart hatred and implant fear and animosity in the minds of the southerners against their fellow-countrymen in the North with the clear object of encouraging the setting up of a separate political status for the southern provinces thus endangering the integrity and unity of the country.”⁷

While these measures were aimed at cultural integration as a means of attaining the goal of national unity, their effect was to antagonize the South and to widen the cleavage between the two parts of the country. Southern opposition, both inside the country and from the exile community, aggravated the political instability that brought General Ibrahim Abboud to power in 1958. The repressions of Abboud's government drove domestic southern opposition underground, and many southerners fled to neighboring African countries, where they organized themselves politically and militarily to liberate the South.

Among the prominent politicians and civil servants who joined the southern movement in exile were Father Saturnino Lohure, who had been a leading spokesman for the South in Parliament; Marko Rume, another politician; Joseph Oduho, an educator; and William Deng, an

administrator. Together with their military and other civilian compatriots, they began to organize the increasing numbers of southern rebels into a liberation movement. In 1962 they created a movement that they at first named the Sudan African Closed Districts National Union (SACDNU). This name recalled the separatist southern policy that also affected other "closed districts" inhabited by non-Arab tribes in south-

ern Kordofan and southern Blue Nile provinces.⁸ In 1963 the movement changed its name to the Sudan African National Union (SANU), a name that resonated with many African liberation movements in the region. A military wing for the movement was formed from the former soldiers and policemen who had gone into the bush after the 1955 mutiny. This military organization was called Anya-Nya, the name of a poisonous insect in the South and also a term for snake venom.⁹

The tone of southern frustration behind the formation of the guerrilla movement is evident in the words with which the Anya-Nya declared war against the Sudan government. "Our patience has now come to an end," said the statement, "and we are convinced that only use of force will bring a decision ... From today onwards we shall take action ... for better or worse... . We do not want mercy and we are not prepared to give it."¹⁰

The movement would later grow in size and strength and eventually secure a good flow of arms and training from reliable sources. In its initial stages, however, it was largely driven by its high morale and by the capture of weapons from raids on army garrisons in the South. With the countryside sympathetic to their cause, Anya-Nya forces were able to flourish in the rural areas of the South, terrorizing government stations, harassing the troops, and creating considerable instability for the rulers in Khartoum. The government response was not to seek a peaceful solution, but rather to take the problem as one of law and order and pursue the military options.

For maximum effectiveness with minimum resources, the Anya-Nya organized itself along regional or provincial bases, which often implied using existing social structures, including tribal identities. The organization of the southern movement abroad also reflected geographic and tribal differences that often made it difficult for the leaders to work together.

The split within the movement was aggravated by developments inside the Sudan. In particular, the overthrow of the Abboud regime in October 1964 and the overtures for peace made by the transitional government of

Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa, which convened the Round Table Conference in 1965, led William Deng to return from exile to join internal politics in the name of SANU. Meanwhile, other founders of SANU remained outside the country.

Fragmentation continued. Over the next five years groups were formed, combined, and dissolved in relatively rapid succession. Under

those changing circumstances Colonel Joseph Lagu, eastern commander of the Anya-Nya forces, revolted against the politicians and former commanders and declared the formation of the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) in July 1970. Lagu was a commissioned officer who had graduated from Khartoum Military College and had served in the Sudan army until his defection into the movement. Eventually, the provisional government in the South “dissolved itself in mid-1970 in the interests of unity, and subsequently all the rest of the parties followed its example and declared support for Colonel Lagu's leadership.”¹¹

Lagu and his officers thus assumed the sole responsibility for the conduct of the southern liberation struggle. While their emphasis was on the intensification of the guerrilla war in the South, they also made effective use of civilians to promote their cause abroad, both in Africa and in the Western world. They were successful in acquiring arms and equipment from outside, especially from Israel, which also supplied training and military advisors.¹²

The objective of the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement was to be rid of northern colonialism. This was stated in a document entitled “What we fight for in South Sudan.” The document stated, “The goal of our struggle is ... the right of self-determination for our people. We want our people to be able of its own free will and under no threat or fear, to determine its destiny, either to remain in a unitary Sudan as a truly autonomous region, or to have nothing whatsoever to do with the North and tie our future with that of our African brothers in their states on our Southern borders.”¹³

The document went on to explain that the war was a continuation of the 1955 revolt of the Equatoria Corps and was in defense of southern Sudanese identity and its African values. “Our specifically African — as distinct from Arab — identity and the common aspirations which unite all our tribes in a common struggle fully qualify us for nationhood and the right of self-determination... . by rejecting the attempted arabization of Southern Sudan and by adhering to our African identity and heritage we exercise a basic human right which is bound to be recognized by

everybody sooner or later... . by waging our own war of Liberation we also block Arab and Russian imperialist expansionism southwards and protect our brothers in East and Central Africa.”¹⁴

Meanwhile, an underground movement, made up largely of southern civil servants, made financial contributions and channeled infor-

mation to the struggle. As they were suspect, southerners in the service of the government were mostly transferred to the North, where they were culturally out of context. This exile rendered them largely dysfunctional and redundant, since they were not proficient in Arabic. As one southern observer noted, "their stay in the North, supporting families and paying comparatively high house rents, and being put in offices where they practically did no work because of their lack of knowledge of the Arabic language created frustration and sometimes bitterness."¹⁵

The situation was alleviated temporarily under the transitional government of Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa after the 1964 October revolution. Elections held in the following year could only be carried out in the North because of security problems, and the sectarian parties that gained power aggravated the situation by returning to the policies of repression. The new prime minister, Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub, gave the South fifteen days within which to surrender and ordered the army to "deal firmly with the outlaws and their supporters. Those orders were obeyed to the letter: the army sailed into massacres of unprecedented proportions against the general populace as well as educated Southerners in Juba and Wau."¹⁶

In July 1965, shortly after the return of parliamentary democracy, the bloodiest massacres of the war took place in the provincial capitals of Juba and Wau. During the night of July 8 in Juba, some 3,000 grass-thatched houses were burned down and more than a thousand people killed by government forces intent on liquidating the Christianized-Westernized educated class.¹⁷ A few days later, on July 11 in Wau, government forces attacked a double wedding party, which had brought together the educated southern elite of the town in the house of Chief Chier Rian, another veteran of the 1947 Juba Conference. Seventy-six people were killed in the assault.¹⁸

The general pattern was for the government to deny responsibility for these official terrorist activities, but, according to Muhammad Omar Bashir, the government went at least some distance in conducting investigations. "A report by a judge of the High Court of Appeal in

Khartoum later found 'abundant evidence and beyond any reasonable doubt' that the incidents had taken place... . The report criticized the Government for engaging in a 'high-handed, illegal and most inhuman act.' "19

Violence escalated and spread to Upper Nile Province. On August 5, 1965, the army invaded the Shilluk village of Warajwok, south of

Malakal, and killed 187 people, allegedly to “ ‘prevent them joining the rebels’. The months of July and August saw the worst type of violence in the whole period of southern insurrection. It was during this period that many southerners of all walks of life sensed that the Government was pursuing a policy of extermination and fled either to the bush or to neighbouring countries.”²⁰

During Mahjoub's premiership hostilities in the South became far worse than anything the region had experienced even during the military rule of Abboud. Ironically General Abboud's military regime had been condemned precisely on account of the atrocities it perpetrated in the South. In retrospect, it became obvious that the northern parties were more interested in exploiting the southern problem to end Abboud's military regime than in finding a political solution to the problems. In the view of one northern observer, “Mahjoub's government was deliberately insensitive to the aspirations of the southern Sudanese. His reversal of the conciliatory approach pursued by the transitional government resulted in widening the gap of mistrust between the north and south, which led, in turn, to untold suffering and the wanton loss of lives on both sides. Although the south played a major role in the overthrow of Abboud, it was soon forgotten and taken for granted once those who considered it their birthright to rule the Sudan regained political power.”²¹

Even after Sadiq al-Mahdi succeeded Mahjoub as prime minister, the hard line was continued. One incident was particularly indicative of the identity cleavage that characterized the relations between the North (the government) and the South (the governed). Soon after assuming power, the new prime minister visited the southern town of Bor, where he called on the army garrison and visited a burial ground to pay homage to the soldiers who had lost their lives in the war. The prime minister stood over a grave of a young northern officer, recently killed, and wept. “No sooner had Sadiq left the town than the army electrified by the Prime Minister's tears, went on a rampage. Twenty-four Dinka chiefs, including some who were detained under custody by the police, were slaughtered.”²² When the only southern newspaper, the *Vigilant*, reported the incident, Sadiq ordered that it be prosecuted. However, the minister of the interior,

Abdullahi Abd al-Rahman Nugd Alla, “an incorruptible, no-nonsense politician, refused to be party to the Prime Minister's fib ..., [having] himself ... visited the site and seen the evidence of the killings.”²³

Bona Malwal, the editor of the Vigilant, which had reported the

atrocities, recalls that it became the policy of the government to treat every educated southerner, whether or not he was a soldier, as a rebel. "The Government declared that it would henceforth authorise the army and other security forces in the South to do whatever they saw fit for the maintenance of law and order in the South. This meant in practice that if the Southern guerilla army attacked a town, all the Southerners within it were suspects and could be killed for not reporting the presence of the rebels. If the army went outside the town for patrol and were ambushed by the guerrillas, all the villagers in the surrounding areas were condemned to death and their villages burned down."²⁴

Evidence of northern brutality in the South abounds. "The anger of the military was directed against the Anyanya and the civilian population alike, in both rural and urban centres; villages were burnt down and centres for tortures were established."²⁵ In Upper Nile province, for example, Kodok was designed as a center for torture, and in August 1964 schools in the provinces were closed because most of the schoolteachers had been rounded up, taken there, and subjected to daily torture. The form of the torture was especially inhumane.

Chilies were put into their eyes and genitals, and each was given two hours' whipping every day tied up to a tree with their heads down. The first to die in these tortures was the headmaster of Dolieb Hill center for girls, and several other casualties ensued. This torture centre was only closed by the southern Minister of the Interior, Clement Mboro, after the October revolution. Mboro could hardly deliver his speech when he visited the center because the sight of deformed and tortured persons made him cry throughout his visit. The victims feebly shouted out: 'Freedom with justice! We demand complete separation!' In the village of Arini, 13 kilometers from the town of Akobo where all the 45 males had been massacred by the army the same politician was shown the bones of all the victims; nobody had been allowed to bury them.²⁶

Elections were eventually held in the South in 1968. William Deng, who had returned from exile to attend the Round Table Conference and had stayed on to pursue the struggle through the political process,

campaigned for a federal arrangement. He won by a landslide in his constituency, but, just as these results were announced, he was suddenly assassinated. Although the government accused the rebels of the

murder, there was hardly any doubt that the army was responsible. The government ordered an investigation, but no report was ever issued. "The murder of William Deng represented a great setback in North-South relations," wrote Muhammad Omar Bashir. "Deng's decision to return to the Sudan in 1965 to attend the Round Table Conference and his participation in that event, in the Twelve-Man Committee, in the Political Parties Conference and in the National Constitution Commission had all made a positive contribution to the search for a solution of the Southern problem."²⁷

The magnitude of the war was more encompassing than can be demonstrated adequately by isolated incidents. Much evidence was furnished by tribal leaders interviewed by the author shortly after the end of the seventeen-year war. In response to a question about what the war meant to the ordinary people in the South, Chief Thon Wai responded: "Our brothers [the Northerners], in their anger with us, harassed all those people who remained at home, including their chiefs. Even if the people of the forest [the rebels] had only passed near a camp, they would come and say, 'They are here inside the camp.' They would proceed to destroy the camp. Children would die and women would die. The chief would only stand holding his head. If you tried force, you fell a victim. Whatever you tried, you fell a victim. Nothing made it better. You just sat mourning with hands folded like a woman."²⁸

Chief Ayeny Aleu described the experience graphically: "The terrible things that have happened in this area, if I were to take you ... around the whole South, to see the bones of men [women and children] lying in the forest, to see houses that were burned down, villages that were set on fire, to see this and that, you would leave without asking: ... 'Is this how we were living in our country?' You would ... not ask me a single question."²⁹

Chief Thon described the art by which those who remained at home survived: "Whenever the boys came in the middle of the night, they would find food, they would find cattle, they would find a goat, they would eat but then leave. If any one of us was caught, he would say, 'This is a man

from the forest, how do I know him? He is a man with a gun, and I have only a spear. How could I fight him? Guns destroy. Spears do not destroy.' We would explain it that way. That is how we lived, avoiding one another, crossing our paths, each man coming and another going."³⁰

The account of Chief Stephen Thongkol Anyijong of the Atwot is

very descriptive of the North-South cleavage and the bitterness with which the war is remembered. Chief Thongkol sat conversing with his wife late in the evening when an Arab trader who had a shop in a nearby area and did not know the chief personally came in a car and asked him rudely to “come here.” The chief got up and approached him humbly. The Arab “ordered” him to carry sacks from the car into his shop. The chief demonstrated an extraordinary patience with the trader. He called his wife to assist him, and they carried four sacks. The Arab then handed him a bank note of twenty-five piasters, at that time the equivalent of about fifty cents. The chief asked what it was for. “It is your pay,” said the Arab. The chief tore the note in front of the Arab, threw it away, and said, “I am the man who owns this land. How could you think to do what you did to me? How could you ask me to take the sacks into the shop? ... And what do you mean by paying me ... I, the man who owns this area?” When the Arab responded impolitely, the chief lost his self-control and slapped him on the face. The trader ran away. People soon gathered around them and wondered what had happened. The chief explained, adding, “I wanted to kill him and be done with him.”

The trader argued that he did not know the man was the chief and that he should have identified himself from the beginning. “Why should I identify myself?” the chief responded. “You should know ... people and know who is who.” Word began to circulate in northern circles that the chief was a rebel. Eventually he was arrested.

I stayed jailed for about two years. I just lay there. I did not bathe. I had no clothes to change. And I lay on the floor. It was ... a house full of insects, dead insects and all kinds of dead things... . My cell was the place into which people were brought when they died. When the bodies rotted, they were taken to be thrown wherever they were thrown. Another man would be killed the following day and would be brought into my cell ... They beat me and beat me. Hot red pepper was put into my eyes.

I said, “Why don't you shoot me and kill me and get it over with? Why do you subject me to this slow death?”

They said, "You have to talk."

I said, "What do you want me to say?"

They said, "You have to say that this idea of the South wanting to be a separate country is something you do not believe in and

that you will never support it... . You have to swear to that... . You will not be left alone until you swear by both the Bible and the [Sacred] Spear.”

I said, “How can I swear when the whole South is angry? When so many Southerners are in jail? How can I swear that the South will not be separate when this is what everybody wants? This cannot be.”

When he was eventually released, Chief Thongkol escaped and joined the rebels in the forest. The consequences of his act on his family were devastating.

Because of my going to the forest, ... they destroyed my things ... in a way that never happens. If you were to know about them, you would cry with tears.

First of all, they took my small child who had only a common cold. When they heard he was the son of a rebel, they killed the child... . I suffered through that.

They came and took 28 goats and sheep from my place. Then they went looking for my other home. They took eighty sheep and goats and burned the village. Then they ... went to my cattle camp and took one hundred cows and three girls... .

My wives went and made another village at a distant home... . They came and broke down the home... . They caught my little girl and took her away. The women they threw into ... a big fire. You know those big Dinka huts that are raised on a high platform. They put fire under the hut. That hut was turned into an oven in which the women burned.³¹

What was self-defeating about this repressive violence is that it was aimed at persuading the southerners to accept the policies of Islamization and Arabization that had become symbolic of southern submission to northern domination. Those chiefs who succumbed and took Muslim names became the favored native authorities. Those who resisted were ruthlessly murdered. Because Islamization was viewed as a symbol of racial and cultural domination rather than as a spread of

faith, some southerners were intimidated into converting to Islam, while some Muslim nationalists abandoned their religion in protest or retained their faith but joined the rebellion against Arab domination.

The overall effects of the war on the South “were disastrous... . Administrative controls and such rudimentary infrastructure as existed to serve the rural areas collapsed. Villages were burnt down by the army, local leaders executed, and herds were raided by both sides.”³² In all of this, the controlling authorities in the North did not recognize what they did for what it was, a colonial domination. For them, the cause that justified the means was the goal of national unity through uniformity along the lines of the Islamic faith, the Arabic language, and the Arab culture.

The North was the product of an assimilation process that was based on racial, cultural, and religious stratification, where the negroid race and culture were denigrated, while Arab blood and culture, crowned with Islam, were esteemed. For the northern Arabs, the South represented the degraded negroid element, but one that could still be salvaged and promoted by extending to it both Arab dignity and the blessings of Islam. Furthermore, the government believed the overriding goal of national unity could be more pragmatically accomplished by the assimilation of the South into the Arab-Islamic mold of the North.

Blinded by their own experience with assimilation and their idealization of the resulting model in the North, northerners generally assumed that their identity was the national model, and what prevailed in the South was a distorted image that the colonialists had imposed to keep the country divided. Arabization and Islamization, northerners believed, would triumph in the long run to reintegrate the country.

Having undertaken to accelerate the cultural integration of the country, the government hastened to unify the educational system along “new lines.”³³ As K. D. D. Henderson put it, “The solution must have appeared to lie in taking a leaf from the book of the old Government and putting southern policy into reverse, as it were. The influence of the existing intelligentsia would be weakened by cutting away its feeder system, the missionary schools from which it was recruited. Substitute a system of Islamic education uniform with that of the north and within a decade you will have built up a new pro-northern Arabicized student body to replace the now discredited leaders of the nineteen-fifties.”³⁴

The government moved ruthlessly in its assimilationist policies and combined them with a tough line against missionary education and religious influence. As Mansour Khalid has noted, “National unity

and integration were ... to be achieved by assimilating the south into the Islamic and Arab culture of the north. No room was to be allowed for cultural diversity, and any dissent was to be ruthlessly suppressed by military force.”³⁵

A TACTICAL PEACE ACCORD

Despite and perhaps because of the heightened level of violence in the South, especially by the army against the civilian population, the end of the war was soon to come. The SSLM, under the leadership of Colonel Joseph Lagu and his capable, well-trained officers, unified the fighting men, disallowed political squabbles, equipped their army with modern weapons, and organized more effective warfare, which was believed to be financed and armed by foreign sources, governmental and otherwise. It became evident that the southern struggle had taken a stronger and more intractable turn. It could not overcome the government, but neither could it be beaten. The Sudan could not enjoy stability with the problem of the South unresolved. And so, as southern resistance continued and intensified with the return of party politics, most observers began to predict yet another military takeover that might expedite the solution of the southern problem. And indeed, a military coup did occur on May 25, 1969, under the leadership of Major General Jaafar Nimeiri. Three years later, in 1972, he concluded the Addis Ababa Agreement with the rebels.

The May revolution had its roots and policies in the October revolution of 1964, in which Nimeiri also played a significant role. By 1969, the northern Sudanese had begun to realize the gravity of the southern problem. Young members of the central council, southerners and northerners alike, began more realistic debates on the South in March 1964, criticizing various aspects of northern administration there. In September 1964 a commission was formed “to study the causes of disharmony between the Northern and Southern parts of the Sudan” and to submit recommendations on a solution of the problem, which would not affect the constitutional unity of the country. The government invited all citizens to put forward their views to the commission and promised full freedom of speech in this regard. The commission, unfortunately never functioned long enough to complete its work.

Having at last been given the long-lost freedom, the students and

the teaching staff of Khartoum University — among whom Hassan al-Turabi, then leader of the Muslim Brothers, was the most vocal spokesman — took the opportunity and linked the southern question with the problem of dictatorship in the country. The southern problem, they argued, could not be solved unless dictatorship was eradicated. Beginning in the university northern Sudanese protested against government policies in general and those in the South in particular. Government coercion could no longer secure order; a week of mass uprising ended in the resignation of the military regime in October 1964. This was followed by a gradual return to normal political life under parliamentary democracy which restored the transitional constitution of 1956.

The transitional caretaker government that followed the overthrown military regime was largely dominated by the intelligentsia of both the North and the South and was led by Prime Minister Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa, an educator with long experience in the southern Sudan. The sensitive posts of minister of the interior and two other cabinet posts were given to southerners chosen by the southerners themselves. Clement Mboro, a veteran of the Juba Conference, assumed the interior portfolio. For the first time since independence, the modern elites of the North and the South politically stood face to face in relative mutual respect. Contrary to past trends, when there was officially no problem in the South or when the problem was dismissed as the outcome of imperialist policies that could be remedied by merely reversing those policies, the government admitted the existence of the problem and pledged itself to its solution through peaceful means.³⁶

Although the prime minister did not withdraw the army from the South or lift the state of emergency he took a step toward the solution of the southern problem by convening a conference. The conference participants — all political parties, southern and northern, and the government as an unofficial participant — were “to discuss the Southern Question with a view to reaching an agreement which shall satisfy the regional interests of the Southern Sudan as well as the national interests of the Sudan.” The conference convened on March 16, 1965, and

deliberated for two weeks. Addressing the conference, the prime minister put the blame on the policies of the British and the succeeding national governments, especially the military regime of Abboud. He then postulated: "A suitable solution must be based on the firm foundation of good will, sincere belief in democratic means, the open ac-

knowledge of previous mistakes and full recognition of the racial and the cultural differences which exist between the North and the South as a result of the historical and geographical factors which I have outlined.”³⁷

According to Professor Nazeer Dafalla, vice chancellor of the University of Khartoum and chairman of the conference, the meeting symbolized a new attitude in North-South relations: “I am ... only stating a fact when I say that the experience passed through since independence and particularly during the last six years has created a new attitude, and that it is this attitude which has brought us together today. I am also confident that the delegates who sit in the round table realize that sitting in this way means no order of preference and further and, more important, that we are not sitting as opposing teams; but that we are gathering in equality with one common objective which is the good of the Sudan.”³⁸

The views of the southern Sudanese were summed up by their spokesman in four points. First, it was their opinion that the relationship between the South and the North had been imposed by external will. The wishes and aspirations of the inhabitants of the South had not been considered. Second, that relationship had been so strained by the actions of national governments, northern individuals, and groups with influence during the past ten years that it required reexamination by the southern Sudanese themselves. Third, the South had been lagging behind in social and economic development, not only when compared with the rest of the Sudan, but indeed when compared with any part of Africa. The people of the South could not afford to wait any longer for others to plan their progress, “which is necessary to earn them a decent place in contemporary Africa wherein their full participation in her overall shaping and sharing of human values is overdue and urgently needed.” “Fourth, “the southern problem can no longer be solved by a cocktail of opinions but only by union of hearts.” The northerners wanted unity “on their own terms.” It was the task of the conference to ascertain what the southerners wanted.³⁹

Even the Round Table Conference of 1965 proved to be a forum for highlighting the widening North-South cleavage. This was illustrated by

the speech of Aggrey Jaden, who represented the external faction of SANU at the conference. After pointing out that the Sudan fell sharply into a “hybrid Arab race” in the North and an “African” group in the South, Jaden said, “With this real division, there are in fact two

Sudans and the most important thing is that there can never be a basis of unity between the two. There is nothing in common between the various sections of the community; no shared beliefs, no identity of interests, no local signs of unity and above all, the Sudan has failed to compose a single community. The Northern Sudanese claim for unity is based on historical accident and imposed political domination over the Southern Sudan.”⁴⁰

Jaden's feelings were widely shared by many southerners at that time. While the Round Table Conference was in session, the Vigilant, Bona Malwal's southern newspaper, wrote in its editorial: “There is little in common between the North and the South except ... the Nile and the accident of common colonial masters... . It was the belief of the southerners that Sudan was a multi-racial and multi-national state and it should have developed as such... . Unfortunately, the experiment of co-existence between the Arabs and the Africans has failed.”⁴¹

In view of the influence that the more traditional elements exerted through their party representation, it is not difficult to explain the gulf that emerged despite the government's goodwill. The northern parties suggested a measure of “regional government.” The southerners dismissed them as equivalent to an “unconditional unity.”⁴² Instead, they made their own suggestions, which were tantamount to loose federation or confederation. Despite these disagreements, the conference adopted resolutions for bettering the situation in the South. Immediate steps included the implementation of measures designed for the return and resettlement of refugees and those inside the country whose homes and property had been destroyed, alleviation of famine in those parts of the South affected by the war, and retransfer to the South of all southern schools that had been moved to the North because of the war conditions.

The conference also suggested certain lines of policy to be followed, including: selection and training of southerners as officers and administrators for the public sector; equalization of opportunities for employment and wages without discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs, language, or race; freedom of religion and missionary activity

within the laws of the land; freedom of movement; establishment of private schools, provided they conform to the laws of the land; establishment of a university in the South; opening of girls' secondary schools and an agricultural school; and reestablishment of an agricultural school, a training center, and a veterinary center, all of which had

closed because of the war. All southern schools were to be headed by qualified southerners, and ignorance of Arabic was not to be a bar to the post of headmaster. A special employment program would be established for southerners. A national council for economic development was to be established with a subsidiary agency for economic development in the South. Priority and facilities were to be provided for the local population for the exploitation of land.

The resolutions of the conference also stated: "The Conference considered some patterns of Government for the Sudan and could not reach a unanimous resolution as required by the rules of the Conference. We have, therefore, appointed a twelve-man committee to dwell on the issue of the constitutional and administrative set-up which will protect the special interest of the South, as well as the general interest of the Sudan."⁴³ There was considerable disagreement on a number of issues, according to Abel Alier, "reflecting the conflicting values between North and South, on which a nation-state could stand or disintegrate."⁴⁴

Muhammad Omar Bashir, the general secretary of the conference, has argued that, far from being a failure, the conference made several significant accomplishments. First, it brought together leaders from the North and the South to meet for two weeks to get to know one another and to exchange views on the problem. "Some of the words spoken by the Southerners must have shocked many Northerners, and vice versa, but this was exactly what both sides needed." Second, the information conveyed to the public from the statements made at the conference informed and educated the Sudanese people about the problem. Third, the discussions were among the Sudanese without a foreign hand, as had been the case with the Juba Conference. The observers from the African countries who were invited were not "foreigners," but "brothers" and "friends" who were there "in the spirit of African brotherhood." Fourth, the resolutions on nonconstitutional issues were adopted by unanimous vote or by consensus and represented a program of action to which both sides were committed. Fifth, although all the parties did not agree to any constitutional arrangement, the conference appointed a twelve-member committee "to dwell on the constitutional and administrative set-up which

will protect the special interest of the South as well as the general interest of the Sudan," a phrase that meant "a rejection at once of separation and of the status quo, without this being clearly stated." Sixth, this position was in fact

reaffirmed in a “special minute,” kept secret for various political reasons, which noted, “The terms of the said committee do not include the consideration of the two extremes — that is to say, separation and the status quo.”⁴⁵

The Twelve-Man Committee identified areas of agreement and disagreement and recommended a regional arrangement for the South. But the Round Table Conference never met again to consider its report. About two months after the conference, the pendulum swung back to the dark past of North-South relations. The idealism of those who then held the reins of power soon brought back parliamentary democracy, and the elections in turn brought back the conservative elements.⁴⁶

As the major parties alternated positions in their power struggle, and Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub and Sadiq al-Mahdi changed seats as prime minister, the agenda for the South went back to business as usual. The constitutional arrangement envisaged for the country abandoned the regional system recommended by the Twelve-Man Committee and leaned toward an Islamic constitution. It was a time when, as Alier explained:

The fever for an Islamic constitution was high. The sectarian based parties, the Umma, NUP (National Unionist Party) and PDP (People's Democratic Party) had found a formidable challenger in the ICF (Islamic Charter Front) under whose influence the old parties in the North, except the Communist Party were pushed to come up with proposals for some form of Islamic constitution. Even leaders like the late Ismail El Azhari and the late Mohamed Ahmed Mahjoub, who had long looked for a secular state, were impelled to support the demand. Southern representatives, of whom I was the spokesman in the constitutional draft committee, pressed strenuously but in vain for a secular constitution. We saw it was the logical thing to have in the country and for obvious reasons. Already there were many problems: the history of relations between the two regions, race, cultures and uneven socioeconomic development, were all there to consider. The basis of the unity of the country was now at stake. The argument in favor of an Islamic

constitution was that the majority of the people of the North are Moslems. One of the dangers of this proposal is that it be countered by raising the issue of race. The imposition of religious uniformity invites a response of race as a countervailing force.⁴⁷

With such sharp disagreements in the Twelve-Man Committee and in the National Constitution Committee, "Southern representatives said enough was enough. In December 1968 we packed our bags and left the committee. A boycott of a constitution draft committee had been reached for a second time in ten years."⁴⁸

The constituent assembly nevertheless adopted a draft constitution, which defined the Sudan as an "Islamic State," but which was naturally opposed by the representatives from the South and the Nuba Mountains. Before its adoption by the assembly political wrangling led to the dissolution of the assembly and the appointment of a new constitutional commission to revise the draft constitution.

A longer-lasting victory for the forces of change and the hope for reconciliation between the South and the North came on May 25, 1969, when young "free officers" under the leadership of Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiri seized power and announced socialism for the whole country and autonomy for the South.⁴⁹ But even this took time to be implemented. The revolution began as an uneasy alliance with revolutionary elements, notably the Communist party, and when the Ansar — the Mahdists — showed resistance, the government crushed their opposition.⁵⁰ The Ministry for Southern Affairs was set up under a southern minister, Joseph Garang, an avowed communist who believed, "the cause of the Southern problem was the inequality which exists between North and South by reason of an uneven economic, social and cultural development, and that all the ills in South-North relations sprang from this situation."⁵¹ Consequently, for Joseph Garang the solution was development and the elimination of disparity.⁵² Under his administration, a number of appointments and transfers to the South were made. A general amnesty was declared, and some refugees returned to the promised autonomy. But the full implementation of autonomy was impeded, partly because its details had not been spelled out and partly because of Garang's preference for practical developmental steps over a constitutional settlement. While southerners at first welcomed the declaration of autonomy with enthusiasm and expressed their support of the government, as time passed without any significant change, their

skepticism and suspicion returned.⁵³

In the meantime, the alliance between the communists and the government was weakening. Although some communists, including Joseph Garang, remained in the cabinet, an open conflict between the Communist party and the government led to the dismissal of most of them. A period of tension and uncertainty culminated in the abortive

leftist coup of July 29, 1971, which ended with Nimeiri's heroic return to power and the speedy execution of those found responsible, including the secretary-general of the party, Abdel Khaliq Mahjub, and Joseph Garang.⁵⁴ Abel Alier, in whom southerners had great confidence, replaced Joseph Garang as minister for southern affairs. Southerners expressed their apprehensions and mistrust of the Communist party, as represented by distrust of Joseph Garang, in support of Nimeiri, especially because the three-day coup accused Nimeiri's regime in its statement on the southern policy of embracing separatist elements. Soon after the abortive coup was suppressed, Nimeiri presented himself to the Sudanese people in a plebiscite and was chosen by an overwhelming majority as president of the republic. Alier was appointed one of the two vice-presidents, while continuing as the minister for southern affairs.

Alier persuaded the president to hold talks with the rebels, a strategy that Joseph Garang had opposed. Once the talks were started, both sides saw an opportunity for a settlement and worked diligently to make them a success. Southern leaders in exile were persuaded to adopt a more moderate stance based on accepting a one-state framework. Arguments convinced them that separatism was not a viable option in Africa; that the offer of southern autonomy was a good start; and that the people of the South needed a respite from their suffering. They also realized that support for the southern separatist stance was being eroded by the government's amnesty policy, by the measures being taken to implement southern autonomy, and by the open consultations between government and southern leaders both within the Sudan and abroad.

The point was made and communicated to Alier that for the leadership, officers, and men of the southern resistance movement to embrace peace, they must be absorbed into the army and other occupations. In other words, they must be given a vested interest in the peace. A long, intensive, and comprehensive process ended in the Addis Ababa Agreement, which gave regional autonomy to the South.⁵⁵ Once that was agreed on, the president promptly enacted it into law: the Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act came into force on March 3, 1972.

The act provided for an elected people's regional assembly and an appointed high executive council, whose president was to be the head of the region. The regional assembly was empowered to legislate for

preservation of public order, internal security, efficient administration, and the cultural, economic, and social development of the southern region. The high executive council, which acted on behalf of the national president and was responsible to the president and the regional assembly for the efficient administration of the region, was empowered to specify the duties of the various departments in the southern region provided that, on matters relating to ministries and departments of the central government, it acted with the approval of the president.

Among the matters expressly excluded from the jurisdiction of the regional assembly and the high executive council were national defense; external affairs; currency and coinage; air and interregional river transport; communications and telecommunications; customs and foreign trade, except for border and certain commodities that the regional government might specify with the approval of the central government; nationality and immigration; planning for economic and social development; educational planning; and public audit.

In his speech on the occasion of the promulgation of the law, the president drew special attention to the provisions relating to the armed forces and language, both of which he said had been extensively discussed in the negotiations. The issue of the army concerned the representation of the South proportional to its population, regional control over the troops stationed in the South, and temporary arrangements for absorbing members of the Anya-Nya rebel army. Provisions on language made Arabic the official language of the Sudan, "and this is not a negotiable question. Our brothers from the South have agreed on this provision in the basic agreement. However, taking into consideration certain practical elements, we have agreed that English should be used as a working language in the Southern region, besides other local languages that may prove useful for efficient administration or under certain practical circumstances."⁵⁶

A provision on freedom of movement guaranteed all citizens the freedom to travel in and over the southern region. Restriction or prohibition of movement might be imposed on a named citizen or citizens solely on

grounds of public health and order. Another provision guaranteed all citizens in the southern region the right to equal opportunity of education, employment, commerce, and the practice of any lawful profession. The rights of citizens were not to be prejudiced because of race, religion, gender, tribal origin, or place of birth. Finally a special

provision stated that “the People's Regional Assembly shall strive to consolidate the unity of the Sudan and respect the constitution.”⁵⁷

As a symbol of the importance he attached to the settlement, the president announced that March 3 would be celebrated as a national holiday called “The National Unity Day.” The president declared, “It is in the greatness of this day that I urge every national all over the country to mark this day as the beginning of a new era of the unity of the Sudanese soils and to view it as symbolic of an everlasting peace, prosperity and a progressive development of a new Sudan.”⁵⁸

The act did not touch on foreign policy but Nimeiri's statement, skillfully worded, appeared to be an explanation for why he did not follow up his original announcement that he intended to join the proposed Arab Federation of Egypt, Libya, and the Sudan. Internal opposition to the idea led him to suspend the Sudan's joining the federation. Nimeiri said that such a step should evolve from the people and that the Sudan would join as soon as and only when the Sudanese people desired and were ready to join.⁵⁹ Presumably alluding to this strategy which was of special interest to the South, Nimeiri said: “We entered into this for the good of the country and to ensure its unity ... to meet our responsibilities that derive from our being part of the Arab World and also realizing the realities of our situation [as] part of Africa; to improve our neighbourly relations and also to support African movement.”⁶⁰

The president also touched on the significance of the settlement for Africa at large. “Divergence in cultures and origins is a common factor in all African countries. None of them is free of such difficulties as those suffered by the Sudan as a result of colonialist policies. Our success in settling this problem is a victory for our continent. It will give them new hope and new belief in national unity despite cultural and other differences.”⁶¹

The most significant thing about the new southern region and self-rule was the degree to which it enhanced the sense of national unity in the South, which was contrary to the expectations of most northerners. The

usual fears expressed by the skeptics had always been that autonomy and definitely federation, were steps toward separation. Following the settlement, no observer could fail to see a genuine feeling of solidarity with the North under the leadership of Nimeiri and a desire for national unity, a spirit that contrasted sharply with the presettlement attitude of the South. This new spirit was lucidly dem-

onstrated by Joseph Lagu, the military leader of the southern movement, when he said on his return to the Sudan after the settlement: "I never was a separatist... . My only aim was to obtain recognition for Southerners. It was my opinion that such an aim could be achieved through the application of force, but I never intended to use force to achieve separation."⁶²

Politically the country was reorganized around the Sudan Socialist Union, conceived as an alliance of the working forces that included industrial workers, farmers, young people, women, intelligentsia, professionals, national capitalists, and, of course, the army. A people's national assembly was established, and in it geographical areas and the various elements of the alliance were represented through both elections and presidential appointments. A new constitution was adopted that incorporated the Addis Ababa Agreement and tried to strike an equilibrium between the main political forces in the country. Islam was recognized as the religion of the majority, while Christianity and other religious beliefs were also acknowledged. Arabic was made the official language, while English was accepted as the working language of the South. By virtue of the provisions of the Addis Ababa Agreement, local languages, cultures, and customary laws were also accommodated.

On the basis of these domestic achievements, the Sudan began to move regionally and internationally as an advocate for the peaceful settlement of disputes, taking or supporting initiatives for peace and reconciliation. Sudanese diplomacy was effectively mobilized to foster Afro-Arab solidarity and international cooperation in the development of the country.⁶³ As an Arab country with access to petrodollars beginning in the 1970s, the Sudan's vast potential in agriculture and animal wealth made it ideally suited for trilateral cooperation involving Western technology and Arab money. The country was projected as a potential breadbasket for the Middle East and North Africa.⁶⁴ Bilateral aid from Arab countries and the resources of several Arab funds became available to the country, and the Arab Authority for Agricultural Development was created with its headquarters in Khartoum. The Sudan became its first recipient country.

Despite the ruthlessness with which Nimeiri had destroyed his rightist and leftist adversaries, he quickly developed, in the eyes of most of the world, the image of a statesman committed to the ideals of peace, reconciliation, development, and nation building. He was proposed as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. All in all, a degree

of mutual understanding and trust prevailed between Nimeiri and the South, which was vital to the relative stability and security his regime enjoyed.

Nimeiri thus created the formal institutions of autonomy within unity but he also projected to the nation the elements of a Sudanese identity grounded on the realities and the diversities of the country. The informal and comfortable way he dressed, in safari suits of the type common throughout black Africa, his extensive travels around the country his participation in cultural events reflecting local variety the encouragement of cultural self-expression by the various regional groups, the national media's representation of these activities, and, not least, the emulation of his ways by his ministers and government officials gave the Sudan for the first time the image of a country in which both African and Arab elements coexisted and interacted on a relatively equitable basis. Although Arabism and Islam still had the upper hand, southerners no longer felt defensive against and resistant to Arab-Islamic symbols. A number of prominent southerners married Arabized and Islamized southern women whose cultural outlook was at least a South-North blend. And the more participation in government broadened, the more the ethnic and cultural diversities along African-Arab lines surfaced even within northern regions and the more that revelation reinforced the emergence of the real identity of the nation.

It is now obvious in hindsight that although the Addis Ababa Agreement in fact offered the nation the most promising basis for unity to this point, it was not initially intended by Nimeiri as a national accord that would endure over the long run. It was, in fact, a tactical move by a desperate dictator in search of a political base of representative power.

The May revolution that brought Nimeiri to power had come with fresh prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict, but although the domestic circumstances were opportune and the new regime had expressed its desire to end the conflict shortly after it came to power, there were irreconcilable differences within the government on the issue of negotiating with the rebels. It was only when Nimeiri's needs dictated

reaching out for the South that he disregarded those differences and proceeded with negotiations. He had now alienated both the right and the left and was building on the support of the center, which his key advisors suggested should include the South as the

strongest alternative political and military power base. Nimeiri was persuaded against the opinion of his military advisors and senior officers, some of whom resigned from the Revolution Command Council in protest. These officers argued that it would be disgraceful for the military to negotiate with the rebels. President Nimeiri, who was well known for his decisiveness, responded that as the leader of the revolution, any disgrace or dishonor for the military would first and foremost fall on him, a risk he was prepared to take.⁶⁵

The regional and international circumstances also favored Nimeiri's position. By his heroic victory against the communists, he had endeared himself to the West, with which the Sudan had broken relations after the Six-Day War of 1967. The foreign minister, Mansour Khalid, was bent on normalizing relations with the West, and the international community wanted to assist a peaceful Sudan with relief and development aid. In this situation, there was much for Nimeiri to gain and little, if anything, to lose in ending the war. Muhammad Omar Bashir, who devoted much of his scholarship and political action to the problems of the southern Sudan, enumerated a number of factors for the success of the Addis Ababa negotiations.⁶⁶ First, both sides were convinced by then that no military solution was possible. Second, the military operations in the South were a continuous drain on the meager resources of the country. Third, the new policy toward the South was convincing more and more southerners that there was no alternative to a negotiated settlement to the problem, especially as divisions and disagreements continued to be a source of weakness in the movement, even after it had been united under the leadership of Joseph Lagu.⁶⁷ Fourth, the approach of the World Council of Churches to the southern political leaders, first made in May 1971 and intensified during the following month, elicited a general consensus on the desirability of peace. Fifth, the abortive leftist coup d'état of July 1971 and the resulting changes in policies, structures, and personalities removed any doubts that existed in the minds of many southerners about the sincerity of the regime's intentions toward the South. Finally, the appointment of Abel Alier, a respected southern leader, as vice president and minister for southern affairs in August 1971 accelerated the whole operation of peace.⁶⁸

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Muhammad Omar Bashir's last point, far from being the least, warrants focal attention because it was perhaps the most pivotal factor in the success of the Addis Ababa negotiations. Abel Alier, a southerner

whose modesty, loyalty, and commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict had been tested, was now given full charge to develop and implement a policy he had long advocated. Unlike the ideologically committed Marxist Joseph Garang, Alier appeared to be almost a pacifist, probably the reason why he was trusted by the North in the first place. But he also enjoyed considerable respect across the political spectrum. After the abortive communist coup, which ended with the execution of Joseph Garang, Alier emerged as the obvious alternative and one in whom Nimeiri and the North as a whole placed their trust. But Alier was by no means a northern stooge or puppet. He had been a prominent member of the Southern Front, which had advocated self-determination for the South. He had resigned his position as a judge to participate in the Round Table Conference and had been the southern spokesman in the constitution draft committee of 1968. That he was chosen by Nimeiri to mastermind the peace process and to lead the government delegation to the peace talks that resulted in the Addis Ababa Agreement is one of the anomalies of negotiation. In a way, it reflects both the effectiveness of an authoritarian leadership in the negotiation process and, in view of the eventual fate of the Addis Ababa Agreement, the weakness and unsustainability of such narrowly based settlements. But one obvious advantage is that through his modest, unassuming, and unthreatening manner, Alier raised the level of North-South dialogue beyond the traditionally patronizing and condescending level, though not entirely to full parity.

Alier's leadership of the Sudanese mediation team almost made the Addis Ababa negotiations a South-South dialogue. This was only balanced by his sensitivity and evenhandedness. As he has written, "I headed a delegation, essentially Northern Sudanese in both composition and disposition. I had not recommended any Southerner for the delegation, aware that even one or two more might make the talks appear one-sided, merely talks between Southerners. Indeed my leadership of the delegation was later criticized on these grounds. It was said that the Sudan Government delegation was a Northern delegation whose leadership should have been Northern Sudanese — a valid criticism, although the background leading to the talks was not known by

many, including some members of the Sudan delegation.”⁶⁹ This is an important insight as it reflects the narrow base of the peace initiative and process. As Alier himself has intimated, “The government had only gradually been reconciled to this initiative through a series of proposals and declarations... .”⁷⁰

Alier testifies that the Sudan delegation worked as a team with the northern Sudanese, maintaining their freedom to meet and plan alone, without him. This was particularly the case when the serious issue of security arrangements was under discussion: "The sensitivity of the subject was such that, though I was leader of the Government delegation, I was excluded from the talks which were secretly organized and concluded by the members of my delegation when the subject became the main preoccupation of both sides. Security was the area where the most sensitive nerve of the North-South conflict was embedded. All other matters, including sharing of economic resources, depended upon it."⁷¹ Alier was surprisingly accepting of his exclusion by the delegation he was heading: "I gave my colleagues the impression that I was not aware of their unease and what they were doing. For my part, what they did was quite legitimate and necessary. They represented the North and in that capacity were entitled to discuss the subject without me. It was acceptable to me that they took this secret initiative, although I was aware of their meeting since it took place in the room next door to mine."⁷²

This last point raises the question of whether the northern members of the delegation were less sensitive or merely inadvertent and how, being next door to the leader of their delegation, they did not expect him to notice that something rather odd was going on. Obviously from Alier's testimony, they did not realize at the time that he was aware of their machinations: "Some of my close associates were embarrassed when they later discovered that I was fully aware of what they were doing but welcomed it as I would have encouraged it if they had consulted me." He was also excluded from the secrets of the southern delegation, led by Ezboni Mondiri. "Fortunately the SSLM delegation were also keeping studiously away from me throughout the period of the talks, except for occasional contacts via the Southern observer team. The SSLM considered me a government man and as such spokesman for the North. That too was acceptable; this is how I wished it to be."⁷³

The whole conference, in fact, was a convergence of fortuitous circumstances. Alier's role was an unusual blend of representation,

negotiating positions, and perspectives on issues, and it worked well in combination with the moderating role of the respected Reverend Canon Burgess Carr of the African Council of Churches; the observer's standpoint of Ambassador Muhammad Sahnoun of Algeria (then Deputy Secretary General of Political Affairs of the Organization of African

Unity); the towering moral influence of the host, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia; and the presence of representatives from several African countries.⁷⁴ This accounted for both its remarkable success and its narrow base, which later made it possible for Nimeiri to dismantle the agreement unilaterally. In due course, Nimeiri admitted both his original tactical designs and the unexpected success of the agreement.

Nimeiri revealed the tactical objectives behind the agreement and the potential for a unilateral abrogation when he said to a committee considering the application of regionalism to the North that he could not understand the fear of separation resulting from regional arrangement. Invoking the name of God as his witness to the truth, he confessed that when the leaders of the revolution accepted the Addis Ababa Agreement, their secret plan was to have the southern rebels surrender their arms. Then, within two or three years, they could tear up the agreement and continue with their own agenda without the southern military threat. To their surprise, regionalism had worked so well that they wanted to apply it to the whole country. The fear that such an arrangement might lead to fragmentation and possible disintegration of the country was therefore unjustified.

As calculated, the agreement provided Nimeiri with a solid southern base of support. In 1976 this proved most valuable against the invasion of the Libyan-supported opposition groups. But the attempt itself indicated the vulnerability of the regime to the extremist elements in the North. Nimeiri tried later to pacify them, not only through “national reconciliation,” which incorporated the opposition groups in the government, but also by extending the system of regionalism to the North and embracing the Islamic agenda by introducing the September Islamic Laws. He thus progressively undid the arrangement with the South in the belief that the northern opposition groups were more dangerous than the South and that the southern potential to rebel had been effectively and decisively neutralized. Subsequent events proved him wrong.

His policies of Islamization, division of the South, manipulation of oil reserves and water resources, and attempting to move southern troops to

the North to undercut the capability for a potential rebellion all combined to trigger the resumption of hostilities. As Joseph Garang had prophetically foretold, "The real danger to the revolution will come from the South and not from Aba [Island] where El Hadi's rebellion was easily defeated."⁷⁵ He was referring here to the revolution's

crackdown on the Ansar's rebellion against the regime, which he saw as inconsequential compared with the crisis in the South.

While Nimeiri's pragmatic, short-term calculations are obvious, Alier's standpoint is more problematic. He clearly desired peace with justice for the South and honor for the North and had worked quietly and perseveringly for that objective. He was not exactly a neutral third party, for he, as a southerner, was involved emotionally and politically. He was also a leading member of the Southern Front, which called for self-determination and which was viewed by most northerners as separatist. Alier, a moderate by personality and disposition, belonged somewhere in the uncharted middle. He was perhaps too honest for the calculating Nimeiri and the excessively suspicious South, and therefore he found himself constrained or rather undermined in his long-term perspective on the peace process. How valuable or useful are people like Alier, who on the one hand can bring people together by being sensitive to many different points of view but on the other hand can be undercut by less scrupulous manipulators with a far less flexible agenda?

Alier was certainly not naive; an evolutionary process eventually led to his being vindicated as a reliable spokesman for the South who could deliver. There was every reason to trust that this was a genuine conclusion on the part of the North, despite Nimeiri's tactical shifts, which to a degree tarnished Alier's credibility in the South. In a sense, Alier's role and performance in the Addis Ababa peace talks reflected the classic wisdom of leadership among both the Dinka and the Missiriya Arabs: successful mediators must appear to favor the position of the party that is farthest removed from them, but without doing injustice to either side. Such mediators are seen as evenhanded, and they often succeed in resolving conflict between factions.⁷⁶ Superficially, Alier was on the side of the government, but only as a median point whose ultimate objective was to serve the best interest of his people. Another cultural aspect of the process was the extensive consultations that he conducted in preparation for the talks. In the tradition of Nilotic egalitarianism, where every group or individual feels pivotal to any negotiation process, consultations must be as comprehensive as possible if they are to

achieve a functional and viable consensus, without which no settlement can be sustained.

While the Addis Ababa Agreement signified a major step toward peace in the Sudan, it did not resolve the crisis of national identity as

the central issue in Sudanese nation building. The agreement itself was based on the asymmetry of identities and relations between the North and the South. A system of autonomous participation cannot be said to be fully equitable. Although autonomy was the best solution then, it could not be a final remedy to the southern grievances. As the author argued at the time, "It is hard to expect that Southern Sudanese will be content with regional participation only and not be concerned with major national and international issues affecting Sudan's identity."⁷⁷

If Nimeiri's alienation from the organized political constituencies necessitated his wooing the South as a potential ally, and Abel Alier emerged as a persistent but benign apostle of peace, what was the motive of the SSLM in accepting mediation and a settlement? In a nutshell, it was to seize the momentous opportunity to achieve the maximum possible under the circumstances, recognizing that the declared objective of secession was unattainable.

POLARIZATION

While the Addis Ababa Agreement was generally perceived to be an instrument of peace and unity that fostered an equitable and accommodating political arrangement, some groups remained in opposition. Right-wing factions of Arabism and Islam saw the agreement as a victory for their adversaries — the southern Christians, the secularists, and the dictatorship. There were also southerners who saw the agreement as a virtual surrender and chose to remain outside the settlement. Muhammad Beshir Hamid captured the response from both sides when he wrote, "Despite important concessions from the Northern parties, there was still little common ground. The Northerners, while offering some regional devolution of power, stopped short of federation; the Southerners, while accepting a unified Sudan, wanted the loosest of confederation."⁷⁸

Abdelwahab el-Affendi described this structural conflict of interests and the manner in which it undermined what many in the Sudan and around the world saw as Nimeiri's and the country's greatest accomplishment: "The Addis Ababa agreement ... brought peace and the establishment of

the Southern Region, and cast the May regime ... in a more favourable light in the West, especially after his violent break with the communists the previous year. The southerners now actively

supported Nimeiri, and in fact were the main prop of the regime... . The Islamists and their allies were very suspicious about the Addis Ababa agreement, and were certain that it had secret clauses of an anti-Islamic character.”⁷⁹

Abdelwahab el-Affendi reported that a serious debate ensued among the Islamists about allowing the South to secede if that was necessary to set up an Islamic state in the Sudan. The debate had begun in 1974, when a program proposed by the Muslim Brothers for the formation of a broad Islamic organization grouping all major political parties in the Sudan appeared to exclude southern participation. In fact, the Muslim Brothers justified the call for a united Muslim front on the grounds of the need to meet “the new challenge of the South which demanded from the North unity in defence of its interests and its cultural identity against the [Christian] missionary, imperialist, racist monster.”⁸⁰ The Muslim Brothers, who proposed bringing together the major political groups (Umma, the DUP, and their own Islamic Charter Front, the ICF) into a united front based on Islam, were aware of the charge that “any association based on Islam automatically excludes non-Muslim citizens.”⁸¹

Nimeiri was faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, he needed the South, which was proving to be his main source of security. On the other hand, he continued to be threatened by the rightist, mostly Islamic, opposition groups. These groups, which operated largely in exile, were proving to be an increasing menace and a credible source of violent change. In 1976 they staged a carefully planned attack in Khartoum, with weapons and men smuggled from Libya through the northwestern border and discreetly transported to the capital city, where they were planted in strategic places.

President Nimeiri had just concluded a very successful visit to the United States, which represented a breakthrough in the efforts to normalize bilateral relations. Relations had deteriorated markedly after the assassination on March 2, 1973, of the U.S. ambassador and outgoing chargé d'affaires in Khartoum. The Black September Palestinian

terrorists had subsequently been tried, condemned, and sentenced to imprisonment, but then they were turned over to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Cairo. The outraged U.S. reaction fell just short of a total break in relations. Sudanese representatives in the United States focused on reversing that situation.

Nimeiri's three-week visit to the United States was the culmination

of an intensive diplomatic initiative. Nimeiri returned to Khartoum right at the time of the surprise Libyan-backed invasion which, although eventually suppressed, inflicted heavy casualties on the country and left the government and the president in shock. Southerners played a critical role in defeating the invaders not only as fighting men, but also because the southern leadership held to the political center and established useful contact with Egypt and the outside world. Bona Malwal, then the minister of information and culture, wrote:

The incident of July 2, 1976, also proved the worthiness of the role of the autonomous Southern Region on behalf of the May Regime. The small radio station at Juba in the South became the effective voice of the May Regime during those twenty-four hours in which Radio Omdurman was out of action. Messages from the Central Government were relayed to Juba for broadcast to the world together with the continuous statements of support by the Government and people of the South for the May Regime. Radio Juba was monitored in East Africa and its messages relayed all over the world, providing an important outlet to the outside world at a difficult moment in the national life of the Sudan. This role also proved to be a great morale-booster for the army, the people and their Regime.⁸²

Sadiq al-Mahdi, the leader of the opposition, was tried in absentia and sentenced to death. But he continued to move freely and safely among a number of host countries. Admitting full responsibility for what the regime called the "Libyan invasion," he promised to try again. This added to the nervousness of the regime and, in particular, President Nimeiri, the personal target of the Libyan involvement."⁸³

The Sudan's initial intention to bring the case against Libya to the UN Security Council was abandoned when Arab countries intervened and persuaded the Sudan that it would be an unacceptable break of the generally recognized principle that an Arab country should not raise a case against another Arab country in front of the international community. Not until the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, in which the United States played the pivotal role, was that principle decisively discarded.

A year after the Libyan-backed invasion, Nimeiri met secretly with Sadiq al-Mahdi and agreed on a national reconciliation that would bring the opposition into the government and lead to a major democra-

tization of political life, including all institutions of the ruling Socialist Union. The observance of fundamental liberties was apparently part of the package that Nimeiri and Sadiq had agreed upon. Shortly thereafter, the Sudan also normalized relations with Libya, an arrangement that was mediated by Sadiq al-Mahdi himself.

National reconciliation led to the appointment of a number of opposition leaders to prominent positions. The leader of the Muslim Brothers, Hassan al-Turabi, the brother-in-law of Sadiq al-Mahdi, was appointed to a succession of important positions, starting as assistant secretary general for foreign affairs in the Socialist Union, then attorney general, then presidential advisor on legal affairs, and finally presidential advisor on international affairs. Sadiq al-Mahdi himself was appointed to the politburo of the Socialist Union.

Southerners watched the reconciliation process with concern as they saw the traditional parties resume a prominent position in the political process. For a while reconciliation seemed to broaden the basis of national consensus and to promote peace and stability. Soon, however, significant differences developed between Sadiq al-Mahdi and Nimeiri over the conciliatory agreements and their implementation. Sadiq was particularly adamant that democratization of the system and respect for fundamental rights had been the cornerstones of his agreement with the president. Nimeiri insisted that all he had agreed to was the involvement of the opposition in the government to allow it to operate democratically through the existing institutions. In due course, while those members of the opposition who had been involved in government retained their positions, Sadiq al-Mahdi became openly opposed to the regime.

At the same time the regime continued to broaden its political base by applying regionalism to the North, although the northern regional governments had fewer powers vested in them than did the southern regional government. The application of regionalism to the North was initially resisted, the reasons ranging from lack of resources to fear of separatism by some of the peripheral regions, especially Darfur. But Nimeiri defended regionalism vigorously. Citing the successful case of

the South, he saw no reason to be fearful of autonomy's leading to separatism. Indeed, he secretly hoped that regional governments could become a source of nationwide security for the regime, helping to prevent a recurrence of the Libyan-type invasions of 1976.

But as Muhammad Beshir Hamid explained, national reconciliation

and the application of regionalism to the North did not entirely eliminate opposition to the regime. "Because of the ideological differences and different tactics adopted by the Northern opposition groups, the movement of one group from a position of confrontation to one of compromise meant the weakening of the opposition as a whole but not necessarily its neutralisation. Still less its disintegration. Thus, the broad consensus essential for effective reconciliation was absent among Northern opposition groups and between them and the regime."⁸⁴

In fact, the significance of regionalism in the Sudan as a whole was fraught with contradictions. It gave regions that had been peripheral to the national power structure a sufficient taste of power to realize what they had been deprived of and to demand more. In this connection, the considerable powers enjoyed by the southern regional government constituted an anomaly that was bound to become a matter of concern to Nimeiri, whose presidential power was not uniformly exercised throughout the country since it was constrained in the South by the Southern Provinces Regional Self-Government Act. The ideal as the president saw it would naturally be for the system of regional governments to be uniform in the country and for the presidential system to apply uniformly as well. But being the strategist and the tactician that he was, Nimeiri waited for an opportune time to make the changes he wanted in the South. To this end he would use the alleged complaints of the minority tribes of Equatoria as voiced by Joseph Lagu, the former leader of the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement, with whom he had concluded the Addis Ababa Agreement.

Meanwhile, whether because of genuine religious persuasion, to undermine the opposition leaders and the Muslim Brothers, whose alliance he recognized as mutually suspicious, uneasy and precarious, or perhaps for both reasons, President Nimeiri increasingly leaned toward the application of shari'a and the eventual creation of an Islamic state with himself as the imam. Instead of the liberal president in a safari suit who had won the hearts of the common folk in the peripheral regions and particularly in the South, Nimeiri began to dress in Arab garb, with all the outward symbols of an Islamic sheikh or imam. Perhaps because of the

political threat he posed to those more worthy Nimeiri's Islamic agenda was strongly opposed by Sadiq al-Mahdi and other prominent religious figures as a political exploitation of Islam and a misrepresentation of shari'a. Only the Muslim Brothers pragmati-

cally endorsed it, partly because it did what they wanted but could not accomplish, but probably because it made Nimeiri their ally against the traditional parties.

President Nimeiri proceeded with his program of Islamization. First, he urged his ministers and senior officials to observe the principles of *giyada al-rasheeda* (righteous leadership) by abstaining from alcoholic beverages and all forms of gambling. Then he established a technical committee to revise all the laws of the country to bring them into conformity with Islam. Finally, working discreetly with young Sufist lawyers and cooperating, albeit ambivalently with Hassan al-Turabi and other Ikhwan (Muslim Brothers) leaders, Nimeiri promulgated in September 1983 the infamous September Laws, whose justice led to floggings and amputation of limbs. Most of the victims were poor Muslims from the West and non-Muslim destitutes from the South.⁸⁵ Sadiq openly criticized the September Laws and was detained. The leader of the Muslim Republican Brothers, Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, a saintly man in his seventies who was highly revered for his humanistic and progressive ideas on Islam in the pluralistic context of the modern world, also opposed the laws. He was accused of apostasy tried, convicted, and executed, a version of justice that shocked the world.⁸⁶

Tensions in South-North relations had begun to grow as Nimeiri shifted to accommodate the northern conservatives and to ally himself with the Muslim Brotherhood in promoting an Islamic agenda. The central government had already taken a series of measures in its southern policy that had accelerated the move toward confrontation. An attempt was made to redraw the provincial borders to include in the North specific areas that were known to have rich agricultural land and oil and mineral resources. Because of the determined stand of the South to resist that decision, the plan was eventually dropped. Many southerners still viewed with disfavor the mammoth Jonglei Canal project, which was designed to save the Nile waters from evaporation and to retrieve valuable land from the swampy Sudd region. They saw its benefits flowing to the North and to Egypt while it destroyed the natural environment and dislocated the human and animal life cycles in the South. Rumors that the land was

being reclaimed to settle Egyptian farmers incensed southerners. Violent demonstrations broke out, and southern leaders were only able to pacify them with considerable efforts. Government plans for the exploitation of the commercial oil reserves that Chevron (Standard Oil of California) had found in the

South provided another area of confrontation. At first the central government wanted the oil to be refined in the North, where the infrastructure would facilitate quick returns. Later it decided that the crude would be conveyed by pipeline to the Red Sea for export. Although neither of the two schemes ever materialized, and the Sudan's oil reserves remain in the realm of potential, these measures were interpreted locally to mean that the North was enriching itself at the expense of the South.

The more the South began to assert its separate cultural identity and make demands for a more equitable share of power, national wealth, and development opportunities, the more the president saw southern autonomy as anathema in the context of his military presidential system.⁸⁷ Political rivalries and ambitions for positions within the South also levied their toll and played into Nimeiri's hand. On the basis of complaints that Joseph Lagu privately expressed against alleged Dinka domination, Nimeiri decreed the division of the South into three regions and decreased the powers of the regional governments so that their authority would be equal to that of the newly established regions of the North."⁸⁸

Reading the restless mood in the South, the government began to transfer the absorbed southern military forces to the North, ostensibly to consolidate the integration of the army. Southerners, however, saw this as an attempt to weaken further the capacity of the South to resort to military action against the government's southern policy. While some units reluctantly obeyed the orders and accepted the transfer to the North, two units at Fashalla and Bor, both in Upper Nile province, refused to move. At first the government used considerable restraint, which misled people into believing that the transfer order might be reversed. Then suddenly the government decided to use force to subdue the rebels. Military operations failed, and the rebels took to the bush to start a guerrilla movement against the government. During the first war, the Bor battalion had been under the command of John Garang. He was then a young man who had just completed his undergraduate studies in the United States; he had returned to East Africa to conduct field work for his

graduate studies and, while in the field, had decided to join the movement. After the Addis Ababa Agreement, he was absorbed into the Sudan Army, was subsequently sent to a staff college in the United States for further military studies, and went again to complete a Ph.D. in agricultural economics at Iowa State University

in 1981. When he returned, he assumed teaching responsibilities at Khartoum University in addition to his regular responsibilities in the army.

When the military operations against the Bor battalion took place, Colonel John Garang, who was then in the area on vacation, decided to join the rebellion and offer his leadership abilities. President Nimeiri's Islamization program also gave the southern rebels more justification for their resumption of hostilities against the government. Before the formal establishment of SPLM-SPLA, rebel groups were mushrooming around the South under the label of Anya-Nya II, signifying a renewal of the first rebellion under what was retrospectively designated Anya-Nya I. The main difference between the Anya-Nya groups on the one hand and the SPLM-SPLA on the other was that the Anya-Nya were driven by separatist objectives, while the SPLM-SPLA declared national unity as the overall goal. They sought to liberate the whole country from discrimination and to foster the creation of a new Sudan in which everyone would enjoy full equality of status and opportunities. Whether this was the real objective or a camouflage for secessionist objectives, is debatable. Whatever the truth, the situation was sufficiently ambiguous to generate a violent controversy within the movement.

The differences in objectives and the struggle for leadership soon brought the SPLM-SPLA to loggerheads with some of the leaders of Anya-Nya II. The result was a schism that continues to bedevil the movement in varying forms and degrees. Ironically the originally separatist Anya-Nya II soon turned into an ally of the government and became one of the so-called friendly forces in the South. These forces were largely formed around tribal sentiments and animosities, on which the government played. They deliberately or mistakenly misrepresented the war against the SPLM-SPLA as a war against the Dinka.⁸⁹

Despite Nimeiri's tactic of exploiting the disunity of the South to military advantage, the SPLM-SPLA soon proved to be a formidable force against the regime. The more the regime felt threatened, the more repressive and unpopular it became. Even the Muslim Brothers eventually fell prey to Nimeiri's ever-changing political alliances, and their

leader, Hassan al-Turabi, left his executive seat under arrest and was placed in preventive detention.

The Muslim Brothers had, however, already taken full advantage of the alliance with the regime and had entrenched themselves politically

and economically. They remained virtually unchallenged in their pursuit of their ideological mission after the fall of the communists following the abortive 1971 coup. With petrodollars financing and reinforcing the Sudan's Arabism and Islam, the Muslim Brothers clearly had the upper hand among all the political forces in the country at that phase of Nimeiri's rule.

The Muslim Brothers particularly benefited from Nimeiri's Islamic banking system, which began in May 1978, when a presidential decree established the Faisal Islamic Bank on very favorable terms.⁹⁰ After the introduction of the September Laws, the country's whole banking system was Islamized. Banks were prohibited from operating under the interest-based system, and all their assets were either liquidated or converted to the interest-free, profit-sharing Islamic formula. This was done at the time Nimeiri was collaborating closely with the Muslim Brothers to undermine the religiously based influence of the sectarian political parties.

This new financial source has been used by the Muslim Brothers as the basis for social mechanisms aimed at fostering political mobilization among influential sectors of Sudanese society. It is widely recognized that an aspiring businessman seeking a loan from one of the Islamic banks must usually provide a reliable reference from an already established businessman with a good record of support for the Muslim Brothers or the Islamic Front. This "has resulted in an almost comic attempt on the part of many in the urban marketplace to assume the physical as well as religious and political guise of the fundamentalist Muslim Brethren."⁹¹ The Muslim Brothers have also established numerous philanthropic and social services to win and broaden their base of support, especially among the young student population, for whom educational scholarships abroad are provided to prepare them to perform particular roles and functions in the movement. The Muslim Brothers are concomitantly very active in securing employment for university graduates. "With the escalating national debt and lack of domestic savings in the country, Islamic banks have become one of the most important sources of finance in the Sudan. Moreover, the Brethren's close links with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states means that there is almost no shortage of cash even in a

country as poor as the Sudan. Within this context it is not difficult to see why the Muslim fundamentalist movement, spearheaded by the Muslim Brethren, grew dramatically from the late 1970s onward.”⁹²

The use of the banking system was only one of the tools the Islamists used to further their agenda. As al-Affendi observed, their movement operated on several fronts.⁹³ For instance, the Islamic African Center, established in Khartoum by a group of Arab states in 1972, was supported and used to promote the cause of fusing African and Islamic identity thereby presenting an alternative to Christian and Western-based Africanism. The movement also established in the early 1980s the Islamic Da'wa [Mission or Call] organization, whose objective was to promote the cause of Islam in Africa. Through Da'wa, the Islamic African Relief Agency was set up to do humanitarian work in Africa. These organizations were intended to compete with parallel Christian organizations, the reasoning being that missionaries had used education and humanitarian aid to subvert African Muslims. It was therefore necessary to provide Africans with an alternative that would not allow the missionaries to exploit African poverty to promote Christianity in Africa.

In 1982 the Muslim Brothers established the Association of Muslims of Southern Sudan, an organization intended to work toward the advancement of southern Muslims. Headed by a senior official in the Southern Ministry of Education, the organization worked mainly in the fields of education and humanitarian assistance, building mosques, organizing religious festivals, and engaging in political issues. The movement became so involved in southern affairs that during the debate on redivision in the South, "The pro-division lobby of Equatorians sought and got the support of the Islamists for their cause. This created a new cordiality between Equatorians on the one hand, and Ikhwan and southern Muslim leaders on the other."⁹⁴

Ironically, the success of the Muslim Brothers through the banking system and the political implications of this success alarmed Nimeiri and forced him to reverse himself on the alliance. His stated reason for cracking down on the Islamists and arresting Hassan al-Turabi was their alleged subversion of the banking system and the economy. Indeed, Nimeiri's political crisis and eventual demise were aggravated by mounting economic problems. In order to circulate the rapidly accumulating petrodollars, the Sudan had overborrowed at a time when

the outside world was eager to lend money particularly to countries with visible development potential. To compound the problem, the imagination of the nation was captured in a grandiose and lavish notion of development that was not growth oriented and was more politi-

cal than economic. Then debts began to mature and oil bills began to soar, while the Sudan's crude remained unused. A severe drought in the West and the East afflicted the country with an acute shortage of food, rendered even more critical by the influx of refugees. Aspirations and realities became unbridgeable, and the collapse of the system became visibly imminent.

Sudan found itself in a cycle of increasing debt and declining production. With much of the foreign exchange which was raised through exports now being needed to meet interest payments, there was inevitably insufficient foreign exchange to satisfy the requirements of industry and agriculture for imports of fuel and spare parts. This naturally affected output in the agricultural and industrial sectors, which in turn reduced exports and thus the availability of foreign exchange. The balance of payments became critically unbalanced; inflation rose in the early 1980s to an effective rate of about 60 per cent per annum; the Sudanese pound steadily lost its value; and standards of living declined severely.⁹⁵

On April 6, 1985, a popular uprising, to which the term *intifada* was applied long before it became internationalized by the Palestinians, was spearheaded by professionals — doctors and lawyers — and the trade unionists. This alliance forced the army to overthrow Nimeiri while he was visiting the United States. The transitional government formed to lead the country back to parliamentary democracy comprised a military council, headed by General Abd al-Rahman Swar al-Dahab, who had been Nimeiri's minister of defense, and a civilian cabinet headed by a physician, Dr. al-Gizouli Daffala, who had played a prominent role in the popular uprising. This government carried out its mandate — establishing a parliamentary democracy — with meticulous loyalty and conformity.

The transitional government avoided the issue of sharia, which had been the bone of contention with Nimeiri. All the governments that have followed the May regime — the transitional government, the sectarian parties that assumed the reins of power, and the present Revolution for National Salvation — have failed to put the brakes on the increasing polarization of the nation and defuse the danger it poses for the survival

of a united Sudan. The critical issue for the North is choosing between the dictates of faith, however politicized and perhaps exploited, and the requirements for national unity with equality and dig-

nity for all Sudanese, without discrimination on the basis of race, culture, religion, language, or gender. That is a difficult choice that still confronts even ardent fundamentalists. Could a Muslim leader emerge like Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, who could reinterpret the Islamic doctrine to create the appropriate political climate and the legal framework for diversity to function within unity? This remains a most pertinent question for which no optimistic answer seems to be in sight.

DILEMMAS OF NORTHERN DOMINATION

This chapter opened with the observation that the South is dominated by the North and that the war that has gone on for decades is essentially one of southern resistance to this form of internal colonialism. Whether the domination is based on racial, cultural, religious, or linguistic considerations is a matter of detail. Whatever the determining factors, they bring identity to the forefront of national policy and confront the country with dilemmas in the choices that must be made between divisive religious dogmas and national unity.

Throughout the independence period, the North has consistently excluded or marginalized the South in decisionmaking at virtually all levels, including the management of local affairs. From time to time, domination by crude force has been tempered by promises made or agreements concluded that were never intended to be honored or were in fact not honored. The South has mostly reacted to these maneuvers, reconciling with the North when promises or agreements warranted, and rebelling violently when provoked by gross violations.

A significant factor in determining the critical flash point has been the extent to which policies or actions of the central government have promoted or diminished a sense of belonging or identification with the country on more or less equitable footing with the North. The high and low points of conflict in recent history show that promises made and broken on these issues have delineated the margin, the dividing line between peace and war, cooperation and conflict, unity and polarization.

The only accord that seemed to promise enduring peace was the Addis

Adaba Agreement, but even that turned out to have been a ploy by Nimeiri, who had authorized it, despite the fact that it worked better than he had initially planned. In the end, the chickens came home

to roost; Nimeiri's own ploys proved counterproductive and led eventually to his political downfall. Even from the perspective of the persistent northern desire to assimilate the South, Nimeiri's original flexibility and openness, if sustained, would probably have succeeded in producing a workable process of cultural amalgamation, with the Arab-Islamic model as the dominant ingredient.

Evidence of this trend had already become visible during the ten years of relative peace and harmony that the Addis Ababa Agreement brought to North-South relations. It can be argued that the situation then resembled the circumstances that fostered the Arab-Islamic assimilation in the North. Had Nimeiri not unilaterally abrogated the Addis Ababa Agreement, the Sudan might still be set on a course toward a smooth Arab-African integration along the lines of what had historically occurred in the North. So at least from the point of view of those opposed to the assimilation of the South by the North, although Nimeiri's policy shift resulted in a tragic resumption of hostilities, it may prove to be a blessing in disguise. The fact, now glaring in hindsight, is that Nimeiri was a player for power and not a statesman.

The picture of Nimeiri's May revolution that emerges in hindsight and in the light of continuing developments is less that of a coherent political framework of nation building than that of a sequence of tactical moves that balanced diverse, often conflicting centers of power to maintain fragile and precarious structures and arrangements for conflict containment. This was the framework that lasted for sixteen years and at one point or another involved most of the Sudanese people to support it and participate in it with enthusiasm for a good part of its duration. According to Peter Woodward, "Every major ideological current had a ready-made counterweight in Sudan waiting to assert its own claims."⁹⁶

Tim Niblock summarized Nimeiri's tactical shifts in a brief but comprehensive overview of his sixteen-year rule:

The political arena, rather than constituting a forum within which national problems could be discussed and solutions proposed, became a theatre

where the president could arrange spectacles ... designed to distract the population from immediate economic problems and to weld together a shifting basis of proclaimed yet insubstantial support... . The 1972 crisis in relations with Egypt, the anti-Libyan and anti-Ethiopian alarmism of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the short-lived 'national reconciliation' with Sadiq al-

Mahdi and some elements of the opposition national front (1977–79), the decentralisation and regionalisation policies (1979–80), the change to a new system of local government (1980), and finally and most notably the adoption of the Islamic shari'ah as the basis of Sudan's laws — all these were important not so much for their policy content as for their utility as spectacles... . Meanwhile, the critical reality was covered up... .97

What gave the regime an intellectual coherence and the appearance of stability, in addition to Nimeiri's own skills in manipulating political forces to his tactical advantage, was the role played by the people he used, mostly from the North, but with notable southern elements, to achieve his objectives and whom he changed with his shifting tactical needs. The communists, his allies against the ruling conservative sectarian parties, gave the revolution an ideological justification and organizational efficiency at the initial phase. Following their ouster, the liberal elements provided a broad-based support from the center and made possible the settlement with the South. At a later phase, the sectarian political leaders and Muslim fundamentalists, who continued to pose a threat inside and abroad, were coopted into the system. Their inclusion highlighted the religious agenda, culminating eventually in the promulgation of Islamic laws. The fact that most of the central figures in his chess game were from the North gave even Nimeiri's prominent southern partners a marginal role in the outcome of the developments as they unfolded.

The quality of the people Nimeiri used also changed with his tactical phases. During the initial and middle phases, when he was still modest, eager to learn, and more willing to take advice, he surrounded himself with highly knowledgeable advisors, whose influence on him personally and on the regime generally was considerable and constructive. Toward the end of his rule, when he had become self-assured and complacent, the system became more one man ruling by presidential decrees. He continued to keep some of his competent and respected advisors close to him, both to contain them and to legitimize his own rule, but his reliance on them was minimal. A few like Hassan al-Turabi were able to promote their own agendas within that framework, with barely concealed ambivalence on both sides. Turabi's approach became so Machiavellian,

in fact, that an insider and admirer described it as fringing on cynicism.⁹⁸

Ultimately, of course, Nimeiri the man, his political objectives, and

his changing needs dictated the course of events. But his personal ambition for power and his tactical objectives were cloaked and given legitimacy by the ideas, principles, and actions of others who, by proxy shaped the modern history of the Sudan in its rapidly shifting, almost schizophrenic character, which eventually proved disastrous for the nation.

In the end Nimeiri ran out of cards and became isolated, with no power base to sustain the regime. The principles of the May revolution at its prime remain plausible, however: the alliance of the political forces; the balance between national unity and ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity; the imperative of decentralization, initially expressed in southern regional autonomy and later extended to regionalism throughout the country; the equitable distribution of services and development opportunities among the regions and between urban and rural centers; and the adoption of a foreign policy aimed at serving national interests by playing a moderating role regionally and internationally and by fostering Afro-Arab cooperation. These were indeed the principles that gave the regime internal stability and external respectability and support.

The conflicting phases of the May regime also indicate the range of diversities and divergences in the country's political factionalism. Nimeiri's shifts clearly were responses to the claims or demands of the various interest groups or factions that he confronted, coopted, or contained through the various phases of the revolution. The critical question is whether these can be harmonized or reconciled to foster a national consensus or whether they are incompatible and therefore do not provide a sustainable basis for a peaceful unification of the country. Was Nimeiri's failure to satisfy all the political forces at the same time intentional or inevitable? Did he mean to divide and rule, or did he find it impossible to foster a national consensus? Is a national consensus possible, or is the Sudan simply ungovernable as a unity?⁹⁹

Without attempting to answer these questions at this stage, it should be borne in mind that at least with respect to the religious agenda in public affairs, the policies of Islamization and its twin, Arabization, have not

worked in the South and are not likely to work in the future, certainly not by coercion or government imposition. What is puzzling and indicative of an even more serious problem is why these policies have been retained and even more consolidated by the governments that have succeeded Nimeiri's overthrow. Is it possible that the unity

principle is under question and that the separatist agenda is quietly or subtly gaining ground? Abdelwahab el-Affendi makes an observation that is suggestive: "The incorporation of the South into the political system had proved difficult ever since independence... . The central government was able to enforce its writ in the South only through the mediation of local politicians, and the legitimacy of its authority was recognized only through the consent of these figures. The state thus lacked direct legitimacy and also lacked the power to enforce its writ if the consent of local mediators was withdrawn."¹⁰⁰

El-Affendi goes on to suggest that the makings of a more cohesive nation-state appear to be under way through the SPLM-SPLA in the South. "Garang's charismatic authority proved a unifying factor and a source of legitimacy for a new force that looks set to impose its hegemony on the South. If this movement succeeds in imposing control, it would be the first time since independence that the potential basis of a state has been established in the South."¹⁰¹ As he sees it, the creation of a modern state out of the recalcitrant tribal structures in the South requires the use of "legitimate force," but in earlier attempts, "actors lacked either the legitimacy or the force, or both."¹⁰²

El-Affendi's perspective on the South may have become dated in the light of the more recent divisions within the southern leadership. But before coming to that, it is noteworthy that he dismisses as "unrealistic" the possibility of this seemingly promising development's being extended to the North to be an all-embracing process of nation building. He sees the devastation of the South by the civil war and the displacement of large segments of the population that have moved northward as having created conditions conducive to state building. Furthermore, he believes the existence of the South as a barrier against Islam in Africa has been seriously compromised, since more than 2 million southerners have taken up residence in the North and are in the process of adapting themselves to the northern culture, which presumably implies adopting Islam. He assumes that many will not want to go back to the South after the war, a situation that could have significant implications for the dynamics of North-South interaction and integration. El-Affendi still sees

the effect of international relief workers on the process as a political obstacle. "For the time being, Christian organizations and Western relief agencies take care of some of the displaced and 'shield' them from direct interaction with the local culture. This is likely to preserve the special 'southern' identity of many refu-

gees. However, the young generation is going to the local Arabic-language schools, and many have become indistinguishable from their northern class-mates.”¹⁰³

By implication, if not explicitly, el-Affendi concludes that these displaced people in the North will become assimilated into the Arab-Islamic mold of the North. This prediction may be sound, but — judging from the recent trends among southerners to return home even with the continuing insecurity of the war, the seeming desire of the regime and of the North in general to see them go, and the obvious conclusion that both attitudes are indicative of mutual intolerance or at least incompatibility — there is probably more to the complexities of the situation than the prediction portrays. Nevertheless, el-Affendi is probably more accurate in his diagnosis of the increasing growth of the Islamic trend as a northern nationalist reaction to the self-assertiveness of the South and its implicit threat to the Arab-Islamic identity which the North espouses for the nation as a whole. The fact that the non-Arab elements from the Nuba joined the SPLM-SPLA “confirmed the worst fears of northerners about the possibility of attempts to impose southern minority hegemony by force. This further isolated the secularists and lent credibility to NIF propaganda.”¹⁰⁴ As a consequence, at least according to el-Affendi, the NIF emerged as the counterbalancing force to the SPLM-SPLA.

NIF managed to establish itself as the carrier of the banner of “northern nationalism,” thus assuming a comparable role to that played by the SPLA in the South. In contrast to the opportunism and lack of vision of traditional politicians, both groups offered their constituents a clear and bold vision about how Sudan's future should be shaped. It is also paradoxical that each group derived support from the existence and actions of the other. The threat to northern cultural identity posed by SPLA, including opposition to shari'a demands, swelled the ranks of the NIF, while fear of the rising power of the NIF drove groups threatened by it to seek a rapprochement with the SPLA, and also secured for the latter the support of foreign powers fearful of an Islamic takeover in Sudan.¹⁰⁵

Whatever the equations of the power play, what northerners fail to

understand is that the barrier between North and South has become one of a more sophisticated sense of nationalism in the South in which

traditional culture has been supplemented and reinforced by Christianity and Western culture. There is no longer a vacuum for an Islamic mission to fill. Islam has become even more blatantly synonymous with northern, Arab hegemony and is accordingly resisted as part of the liberation struggle. "When Nimeiri's Shari'a (Islamic laws) were suddenly declared in September 1983, southern opinion united in rejecting them, ... the division lobby ... sought mainly the exemption of the South from the new laws, and still maintained cordial relations with Ikhwan."¹⁰⁶ Even this ambivalent position is, in the long run, untenable: the choice is reduced to unity under secularism and decentralization or the continuation of conflict under the threat of Islamic theocracy with partition as its counter outcome. But to call for secularism is simply to demand the neutrality of the state on religious matters and not to argue against religion. Indeed, the South appears to be exhibiting strains of religious traditional-Christian revivalism alongside military resistance in the face of the devastation and social upheavals of the war. It can be argued that the process of Christianization and Westernization that the South has undergone over the past century is comparable to what the North underwent during the process of Arabization and Islamization, which underscores the seeming parity of the resulting models in the modern context.

Nevertheless, the fact that the NIF and the present military government have mobilized their material resources to promote Islam in the South, where poverty and survival needs are most pressing, the recent division within the movement, which has given the Islamic forces an opportunity to drive a deeper wedge into the division, the involvement of outside Arab-Islamic resources and forces in defense and promotion of Islam and Arab culture, and the lack of resources and political will on the part of Africa and the Christian West that could provide a balancing role all combine to make the outcome difficult to predict with certainty. But the struggle of the South is too deep rooted and the animosity too intense to be decisively eradicated by military conquest or material incentives, especially under war conditions.

The overriding goal must of necessity be an early end to the conflict. If the objective of conflict resolution is to return the conflict to normal

politics, it is fair to say that such a state of normalcy has hardly ever existed in the history of North-South relations. The pessimistic assessment that the dismal record of North-South relations suggests is implicit in the subtitle of Abel Alier's 1990 book, *Southern Sudan: Too Many*

Agreements Dishonored. In one of its most significant parts, Alier states the options confronting the Sudan. "Options which would be available within the unity frame of reference range from administrative decentralization which was tried in the Northern Sudan in 1980, regional autonomy which was tried in the Southern Sudan from 1972 to 1983 and federation which was partially tried in the form of regional autonomy to confederation which has not been tried... . Separation ... could only be obtained either in the battlefield or by ... the Northern Sudan [adopting] a theocratic system of government and an all-out Arab nationalism... . But if that stance were adopted in Khartoum, it could well spell the end of a Sudanese nation-state."¹⁰⁷

The ambivalence of perpetrating the war while yearning for peace or upholding the principle of national unity while contemplating separation as an option emanate from hidden agendas, which in turn relate to those cleavages that divide the country the parties' perception of the cleavages, and the seeming conviction that they are unbridgeable and therefore undiscussable or, if discussable, unresolvable. The issues involved are essentially those of competing identities and the alternative visions they offer the nation.

Chapter 6 The Emerging Southern Identity

Foreign penetration of the South may be motivated by the assumption that there is no coherent southern culture or system of spiritual and moral values worth recognition and respect. The earlier invaders from the North justified their raids for slaves with this belief. For the Christian missionaries and the postindependence efforts at Islamization and Arabization, the competitive objective was to fill this assumed vacuum. The only issue was which of the competing models should capture the field. Much of this attitude on the part of both the Muslim North and the Christian West has been the result of ignorance of the culture and values of the South.

A common perception is that “what is known as the Southern Sudan today has no history before A.D. 1821.”¹ While this statement was made in 1955 on the eve of the Sudan's independence, it echoes British conviction during the colonial period and continues to be debated and discussed today. Despite the volumes that have been written about various southern peoples, the North remains almost entirely ignorant of southern cultural values, religious beliefs, and outlooks. The southern ethos must be understood if a fair and workable solution to the nation's identity crisis is to be developed and if southerners themselves are to be allowed to be equal partners in determining the destiny of their nation.

SOUTHERN CULTURES IN TRANSITION

An overview of the basic settlement patterns and economic activity of the southern peoples in general and of the Nilotics (Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk) in particular will provide a useful background to these cultural themes. The peoples of the South can be classified into two broad groups: the agriculturists, who inhabit mostly the equatorial region and parts of Bahr al-Ghazal, and the seminomadic pastoralists or cattle

herders, who are mostly the Nilotics in Bahr al-Ghazal and Upper Nile regions. The activities in which these two sets of people engage are by no means exclusive; the agriculturists also keep livestock in limited numbers, while the pastoralists cultivate, though their lives are dominated by cattle and other forms of livestock.

Traditionally most southern peoples live in spread-out settlements. Families or groups of families live in villages, with huts strung out individually or in clusters over a distance of several miles, each surrounded by fields for cultivating various staple or cash crops. The crops include dura (sorghum), maize (corn), groundnut (peanuts), sesame, okra, yam, and a variety of vegetables, tropical crops, and fruits, depending on the particular region. The Shilluk, who have a centralized kingdom along the Nile, where they have been exposed to invasions, are something of an exception: they have developed a pattern of settlement in large concentrations. Among the various peoples of the South, agricultural occupations and animal husbandry are significantly supplemented by such other activities as gathering, hunting, and fishing, especially because much of the South is permeated by an extensive network of rivers, with the White Nile and its tributaries providing the corpus of the system.

Southern society is fragmented into a large number of tribes. This indicates the manner in which the segmentation of the land by natural features and economic activities has influenced traditional settlement patterns and social organization. Some of the tribes that have now been given names reflecting a wider sense of identity were only loosely connected in cultural terms, but otherwise saw each other as different groups and even as different peoples.

Perhaps the most striking feature of southern cultures is the extent to which the cattle economy dominates the lives of the Nilotics, at least numerically the most dominant groups in the region. "One of the determinants of the rapid or slow spread of Christianity in the South has been provided by the contrast between seminomadic cattlebreeding Nilotic tribes (Shilluk, Nuer and Dinka) and the settled agriculturalists."

The life of the Dinka and Nuer groups “is bound up with a cow economy this animal being a veritable god. They are intensely conservative and very proud of their civilization.”² Although writings on the Nilotics understate the vital importance of agriculture to Nilotic society, they accurately underscore the crucial role of cattle in their lives, which goes far beyond the religious or spiritual aspect implied in considering the cow a god.

The combination of cultivation and herding in Nilotic life perhaps explains the manner in which the people's pattern of settlements and economic activities reflect both individuality and collectivity. A family, comprising a man, his wife or wives, and dependent or unmarried children, usually lives in a settlement comprising several huts and a cow barn, with a distance of about a mile from the next family. A village identified by one name will usually spread over a number of miles with the same pattern repeated, either stretched out or around a wide circle of open land. Occasionally one sees a cluster of huts and barns on one spot, indicating that it is the home of a particularly important individual, usually a chief or a wealthy man. Sections of a tribe and subtribes are groups of villages spread out over a considerable distance with recognized borders.

Economic activity has a collective dimension because families of a clan collect their cattle and send them with young men and women in seasonal search of good pastures and sources of water. They will establish a cattle camp, a large temporary settlement in an area that is on a river or a reliable source of water and has plentiful grazing land. In cultural terms, cattle camping for the Nilotics, even more than settlement in the villages, is the main source of pride, dignity, and the distinctive identity — Dinka, Nuer, or whatever the people call themselves.

This pride, which is so closely associated with their cattle complex, provides the ground for their notorious conservatism and resistance to change. Postcolonial trends, however, indicate that this aspect of their culture has been grossly exaggerated. The colonial policies that isolated the tribes and tried to preserve their traditional cultures probably reinforced their conservatism and raised the profile of supposed resistance to change. Many Nilotics believe that the British deliberately kept them behind because of their pride, independence of character, and hatred of anyone who would attempt to impose domination on them. The Nilotics not only resisted British rule in the South, but were instrumental in the earliest manifestations of the nationalist movement in the North, led by the Dinka Ali Abd al-Latif.

When the policies of isolation and preservation were abandoned after

independence, intensive cross-cultural interaction developed. This, together with modern education, labor migration to urban centers, and overall exposure to the outside world, has revealed among the Nilotics an adaptability to change that no one ever predicted.

Recent changes among the peoples of the South, especially political

and economic changes, were the result of colonial rule, despite the conservatism of the British southern policy. The economies of the local population took on their recent characteristics as a response to the opportunities, very limited as they were, that the condominium administration made available through the growth of trade in grain and cattle, the gradual emergence of cash as a medium of exchange, and the expansion of migrant labor.³ Since independence these processes have been vastly accelerated. The process has also been dramatically influenced by the civil war, which has shattered the local population, dispersing people inside and outside the country. The traumas they have experienced may have changed their cultural outlook irreversibly.

Although colonialism established towns in the South, especially in the non-Nilotic regions, the Dinka and the Nuer remained isolated in their rural setting, scornful of any member who would migrate to town for any reason, including temporary employment. Today urbanization has become a major feature of Nilotic life, draining the rural communities of their productive labor force. Urban employment has become a source of independent acquisition of wealth, especially for young people and women, and it has placed them outside the generational and gender stratifications of the lineage system. As a result of these processes of change, the Nilotics have become a people in a modern though underdeveloped country in which they are considerably dispersed and rapidly losing the cohesiveness of their traditional social order. They are now as exposed as any other peoples in the Sudan to all the opportunities, pressures, and constraints of the modern system and are profoundly affected by the local and global environment of the contemporary world.

Nilotic elites now pervade the modern Sudanese system in rural and urban contexts, having joined various political, economic, social, and cultural organizations that have nothing in common with their cattle-dominated traditional economy. But the liberation movements that have emerged since independence have radically changed and reorganized southern society and in a manner that both preserves and develops the integrity of southern identity. Of these movements, the SPLM-SPLA has

certainly been the most modern and effective in reinforcing in the people of the South an extended and cohesive collective sense of identity. Probably more than 100,000 young men and women have joined the movement, though statistics are not reliable. The influence of these people — whose numbers are multiplied when their spouses

and children are accounted for — who are recruited and deployed throughout the South, is obviously considerable.

The organizational structure and mode of operation of the movement itself draw on the local cultures. The formation of the regiments and battalions, their naming system, their morale-boosting songs, their distribution patterns, and their command system all reflect an effective way of building on the structures and the value systems of the warrior tribal communities. The fact that the movement is now being threatened by internal divisions and rivalries among its leaders does not invalidate these observations. If anything, factionalization tends to follow tribal lines and is therefore an affirmation of the integration of traditional and modern patterns of organization and operation.

What all this means is that modernization itself cannot be approached as a wholesale adaptation to new values, structures, and patterns of behavior. Even individuals who are dislodged from their tribal setting and placed in a radically different modern context carry with them those principles that they cherish from their cultural background or are otherwise so deeply ingrained in their memory and personal composition that they cannot be easily discarded. These considerations make it essential for the people themselves and all those who interact with them to understand and appreciate those elements of their culture and value system that accompany and guide them within and outside their territorial boundaries.

ELEMENTS OF THE INDIGENOUS VALUE SYSTEM

Among the central themes of the indigenous value system that the people themselves emphasize and that have engaged anthropological attention are: (1) the pursuit of permanent identity and influence through procreation and ancestral continuity; (2) communal unity and harmony as expressed in idealized concepts of human relations; and (3) principles of individual and collective dignity and integrity. The Nilotic peoples, the Dinka, the Nuer, and their kindred, who are among the least affected by the processes of modernization or development in Africa, exemplify these values.⁴

The close interconnection between the religious beliefs of the Nilotic people and all other aspects of life helps to explain the fundamental values of permanent identity and influence in Nilotic society. The per-

vasive role of religion is almost identical to that of the Islamic system, the difference being that while Islam is centralized and universalized, Nilotic beliefs and practices follow a segmentary lineage system, structured along autonomous territorial and descent-oriented units. This provides for autonomous and personal linkages with God through the ancestral spirits, thereby allowing for a measure of religious pluralism and freedom. The flexibility inherent in these values permitted the Nilotics in the past to adopt aspects of foreign religions and cultures selectively. More recently they have accepted the Christian mission as an inherent aspect of education or development, and they have used it to complement their indigenous spiritual, moral, and cultural values. Change for them was thus a process of adoption and adaptation of desired elements, not a wholesale radical transformation of society. The characteristics that are generalized as resistance to change therefore represent a selective process that ensures continuity while accommodating change and resists a radicalism that would undermine the system.

Continuity in intergenerational succession thus has deep emotional ties to the legacy of the ancestors but is able to adjust to changing conditions. Chief Arol Kacwol of the Gok Dinka, in his late seventies when he articulated these values, said, "It is God who changes the world by giving successive generations their turns. For instance, our ancestors, who have now disappeared ... held the horns of their life. Then God changed things ... until they reached us; and they will continue to change. When God comes to change your world, it will be through you and your wife. You will sleep together and bear a child. When that happens, you should know that God has passed to your children born by your wife, the things which you lived your life."⁵

Writing on the non-Nilotic Mandari people, Jean Buxton quoted similes and parables to make the same point: "People are like fields. They are the grain of the Creator. They are born, grow up, and die. . . . When grain is ripe and ready it is cut by man and finished. The field is left and then re-sown with new seeds. So it is with man."⁶ A Dinka chief, Thon Wai, spoke in almost identical words: "Man is like a tree, the tree that grows from the earth; and man is like grass, the grass that grows from the earth.

One group goes and another group grows. . . . Generations die and other generations grow. People never finish.”⁷

Godfrey Lienhardt highlighted the Nilotic value of permanent identity and influence when he wrote, “Dinka greatly fear to die without

issue, in whom the survival of their names — the only kind of immortality they know — will be assured.”⁸ A man who dies without issue to carry on his name is said to perish, riar, and become truly mortal. Even then, members of his family are under a moral obligation to marry a woman for him, to live with a relative and beget children to his name, according to what anthropologists call “ghost marriage.” Equally, a man who dies leaving behind a widow of childbearing age devolves a moral obligation to his kinsmen to have one of them cohabit with the widow to continue bearing children to his name in accordance with the custom of levirate. The amount of cattle paid as compensation for homicide is approximately equivalent to the average amount of bride price paid in marriage and is, in fact, used to procure a wife to beget children to the name of the dead man. Sharon Hutchinson observed of the Nuer, “The social identity of every woman is fundamentally rooted in her procreative powers and the children they create.”⁹

The emphasis on continuance of identity and influence in the temporal world even after death does not preclude belief in the unknown world of the dead. Admittedly, the Nilotics' beliefs on this matter are complex and unclear. They categorically discard the Muslim and Christian concepts of the afterlife as introduced to their converts and insist that once a person is dead he cannot live again and be judged in a second life. And yet, apart from calling on the dead in prayers, which implies recognizing some form of existence, they sometimes speak of joining their dead and of reporting to them matters of interest or significance among their living relatives.

The notions of existence in the next world and of the continued participation of the dead with the living are not in conflict, but interdependent. These two themes become divested of much of their meaning if they are not seen as interrelated and mutually reinforcing. People die and disappear. The reality of their one-time existence remains, but they also become part of the unknown, which depends largely on belief. Continued participation is a physically, socially, and culturally explainable immortality.

By emphasizing the survival of every individual through a lineage, the Nilotic concept of continued identity, participation, and influence gives importance to both the individual and the group. This is well illustrated by the system of naming. No one family name is applied to successive generations, but instead each person bears his or her own name — equivalent to the first name in the Western system — and the

first name of the father, the grandfather, or other ascendant is then added for relational identification. This addition of the personal names of ascendants continues according to the requirements of the particular circumstances. Essentially this system is similar to that of the Arabs and to the ancient Judaic tradition. While a father's own name is frequently used to identify the family link, no single family name is used by the extended family or by generations within a family as in the West. For instance, a man by the name of Kwol, son of Chol, son of Biong, would be known as Kwol Chol, while his father would be Chol Biong. He and his father would thus not share a last, or family name as in Western custom. The line thus becomes a chronicle of individual names linked by their relationship in the lineage. The Western system also combines the individual with the group identity, but it leaps from the individual's Christian name to that of the original ancestor, from whom the family name is derived, leaving out the Christian or first names of the intervening ancestors.

Every child is taught from a very early age to recite proudly the father's genealogy to the most distant ancestor remembered. Each ancestor's biography is related to the present status of his lineage. The identity of the lineage and its influence are thus explained through the achievements of its founder and individual descendants and successors.

The communal aspect of the concept is also evident in the fact that continuity creates a chain of generations seen as clans or lineages. In the system of naming, people trace their genealogy through individuals; but the clan, the lineage, or the family, as the case may be, is collectively called by the name of its founding father in a manner comparable to that of Arab genealogies or tribes. Alternatively, an explicit identification of the descent group as that of so-and-so is made. This autonomous but interconnected segmentation of permanent identity and influence elucidates the nature of the common, the competitive, and even the conflicting interests of individuals and groups at the various levels of society.

The society is uncentralized, following the example of the lineage system,

in that it has no central authority or all-powerful chief. While some leaders are called paramount chiefs, traditionally their power is persuasive and mediative rather than authoritative. The society functions through a complex process of hierarchical balanced opposition within the well-documented "segmentary lineage system."¹⁰ Paul

Howell, an anthropologist who served as administrator among the Nilotics and the Arabs in the North, notes, "Arab society is segmentary in almost the same way that Dinka society is segmentary"¹¹

Unity in disunity, so characteristic of Nilotic society, is the outcome of the individualized yet collective quest for permanent identity and influence. The concept is essentially individualistic, generated by the importance of enhancing and immortalizing the self. While the self extends into communal identities, the sentiment and united action involved are concentrated in the immediate circles. Since anyone not a member of this immediate group is an outsider, inclusive identifications are increasingly reduced by the multiplicity of intermediate identities. This system of segmentation applies to and reinforces the whole social organization, stressing the autonomy of the individuals or family groupings — the segments within the segmented unity. As Godfrey Lienhardt explained of the Dinka:

[They] positively value the unity of their tribes, and of their descent groups, while also valuing that autonomy of their component segments which can lead to fragmentations. The basis of this occasional contradiction of values lies in each Dinka ambition. . . . A man ... wishes to belong to a large descent group, because the greater the numbers of his agnatic [or paternal] kin who have still not formally segmented with separate agnatic groups, the wider the range of people from whom he can hope for help ... in quarrels either within the tribe or outside it. On the other hand, each man wants to found his own descent group, a formal segment of the sub-clan which will for long be remembered by his name, and wants to withdraw from his more distant agnatic kin in order not to be required to help. . . . These values of personal autonomy and of cooperation, of the inclusiveness and unity of any wider political or genealogical segments and the exclusiveness and autonomy of its several subsegments are from time to time in conflict.¹²

E. E. Evans-Pritchard described the system among the Nuer, who are considered perhaps the best example of the acephalous society with the segmentary lineage system, where social order is maintained through

balanced opposition:

There is ... always contradiction in the definition of a political group, for it is a group only in relation to other groups. A tribal

segment is a political group in relation to other segments of the same kind and they jointly form a tribe only in relation to other Nuer tribes and adjacent foreign tribes which form part of the same political system, and without these relations very little meaning can be attached to the concepts of tribal segment and tribe. . . . [P]olitical values are relative and ... the political system is an equilibrium between opposed tendencies towards fission and fusion, between the tendency of all groups to segment, and the tendency of all groups to combine with segments of the same order. . . . [T]he Nuer tribe and its divisions are to be understood as an equilibrium between ... contradictory, yet complementary, tendencies.¹³

Permanent identity and influence and the implicit values of the segmentary lineage system also account for the Nilotic personal and collective sense of dignity. To be remembered and honored, one must be respected as an individual, honored as an ascendant, and eventually revered as an ancestor. This in turn fosters personal pride and dignity in the individual. Evans-Pritchard captured this aspect of Nilotic culture with reference to the Nuer, who represent perhaps an extreme example of what are otherwise common characteristics: "That every Nuer considers himself as good as his neighbour is evident in their every movement. They strut about like lords of the earth, which, indeed, they consider themselves to be. There is no master and no servant in their society, but only equals who regard themselves as God's noblest creation. . . . In his daily relations with his fellows a man shows respect to his elders, to his 'fathers', and to certain persons of ritual status, within the circuit of its reference, so long as they do not infringe on his independence. . . ." ¹⁴

Despite Nilotic egalitarianism and individual sense of pride and independence, leadership is of critical importance to the value system. Traditionally a chief is not a ruler in the Western sense, but a spiritual leader whose power rests on divine enlightenment and wisdom.¹⁵ In order to reconcile his people, the chief should be a model of virtue, righteousness, and, in Dinka terms, "a man with a cool heart," who must depend on persuasion and consensus building rather than on coercion and dictation. Godfrey Lienhardt wrote:

I suppose anyone would agree that one of the most decisive marks of a society we should call in a spiritual sense “civilized” is a

highly developed sense and practice of justice, and here, the Nilotics, with their intense respect for the personal independence and dignity of themselves and of others, may be superior to societies more civilized in the material sense. . . . The Dinka and Nuer are a warlike people, and have never been slow to assert their rights as they see them by physical force. Yet, if one sees Dinka trying to resolve a dispute, according to their own customary law, there is often a reasonableness and a gentleness in their demeanor, a courtesy and a quietness in the speech of those elder men superior in status and wisdom, an attempt to get at the whole truth of the situation before them.¹⁶

Evans-Pritchard observed of the Nuer settlement of disputes: "The five important elements in a settlement of this kind by direct negotiation through a chief seem to be (1) the desire of the disputants to settle their dispute, (2) the sanctity of the chief's person and his traditional role of mediator, (3) full and free discussion leading to a high measure of agreement between all present, (4) the feeling that a man can give way to the chief and elders without loss of dignity where he would not have given way to his opponent, and (5) recognition by the losing party of the justice of the other side's case."¹⁷

A chief's mediation between individuals and groups, using largely persuasive strategies, was a feature of this all-embracing responsibility toward the dual worlds of man and spirits but, in terms of political and governmental power, not less significant than force. As Chief Yusuf Deng points out, "The Dinka used to say, a man defeated by strength of power comes back. . . . But a man who is defeated with words does not return."¹⁸

Despite the emphasis the chiefs and the elders place on persuasion, Nilotic society was very violent not only in its confrontation with outside aggressors, but also within itself. It can indeed be argued that the emphasis placed on the ideals of peace, unity, mediation, and persuasion emanates from the pervasiveness of violence. Internal violence can in turn be attributed to generational distribution of roles and functions and the sense of dignity young members of the warrior age-sets acquire from

their identity and status as warriors, as defenders of the society from aggression.¹⁹

Young men are organized into age-sets in their mid-teens when they undergo an initiation involving a physical ordeal from which they

graduate as gentlemen with gifts of spears and bulls — “personality oxen” — as symbols of their identity as warriors and herders. Boys start to train from an early age for the warring and herding roles, using a wide variety of games and sports. In this endeavor they are supported and encouraged by corresponding women's age-sets, which correlate to men's, and by the society as a whole, including the elders, who view them with great favor and admiration.

In fulfilling their esteemed role, young warriors exaggerate aggressiveness and disposition to warfare so much that the slightest provocation, whether the violation of the territorial integrity of grazing lands or sources of water or something as trivial as a slanderous song by an adversary, would provoke hostilities. Once a tribal war has broken out, all generations of men fit to fight and women following them to render support will join in. Those who are old enough to be experienced with warfare and to have procreated, yet young enough to be fit to fight, are the ideal soldiers, although often the newly initiated who have not yet married or are newly married are eager to demonstrate their manhood. As Jean Buxton observed of the Mandari, “The still active older men fought on the outside ... while the young inexperienced, and unmarried with no sons to bear their name, were placed on the inside.”²⁰ Although the chiefs themselves are peacemakers and not warriors, the generals who plan and direct the fight among the older, more responsible managers of warfare are chiefly members of clans with the divine authority to bless in addition to transmitting their war skills. At a later stage the role of chiefs and elders as peacemakers is invoked to negotiate reconciliation.

Chief Arol Kacwol, reacting to the assertion that the Dinka are a chiefless people in whose society force is the deterrent behind the social order, articulated the delicate balance between the violence of youth and the peacemaking role of leaders. “[I]t is true, there was force. People killed one another and those who could defeat people in battle were avoided with respect. But people lived by the way God had given them. There were the Chiefs of the Spear. If anything went wrong, they would come to stop the people from fighting. Each side would tell the chief its cause and

he would go to each side and settle the matter without blood. . . . Men [chiefs] of the [sacred] spear were against bloodshed. That was the way God wanted it from the ancient past when he created people.”²¹

And in the words of Chief Giir Thiik, “There was the power of

words. It was a way of life with its great leaders. If anything went wrong, people would get up and travel to [the] ... Chief. . . . He would be called upon to say his word. He would say, 'do it this way.' It was not a way of life of the power of the arm."²² It is clearly paradoxical but perhaps logical that a society in which violence was so pervasive would be almost equally preoccupied with persuasive strategies and peacemaking.

Another paradox of Nilotic society relates to the status of women. The male-oriented lineage system implies that men are superior to women in much the same way that elders are considered superior to youth. Since children to perpetuate the male-oriented ancestral line were the main objectives of marriage and the family men could marry as many women as they could afford, while a woman could marry only one man and had to respect the one-sided fidelity and exclusiveness of marriage. This had the effect of generating in the women an endemic tendency toward jealousy and divisiveness. Lack of a clear voice in decisionmaking also fostered in them a tendency toward manipulative behavior with their husbands and sons, which was suspect as inherently divisive to the male members of the family the lineage, and the clan.

And yet as women are indispensable to the attainment of those societal goals, they are at the center of the value system and can be said to be the driving force in virtually everything men do. Not only are they wives and mothers, active or potential, but they are vital to shaping the child's character and agnatic loyalties. Maternal kin are in many respects, especially in the spiritual powers to bless and curse, considered more important than the paternal kin. Through the system of bride wealth, women are also the medium for wealth exchange and distribution. They play a supportive role in cattle husbandry and even in warfare, for as Jean Buxton said of the Mandari, "If the fighting was near home the women and boys followed to pick up spears and arrows and assist the wounded."²³

The Nilotic attitude of domination with respect to women has sometimes led to extreme views about their place in society, with some alleging a form of enslavement and others maintaining that "the position held by the

woman is a high one, and she is considered man's equal.”²⁴ Writing on the Nuer, Sharon Hutchinson explains the degree to which men and women are interdependent in a manner that approximates equality despite appearances to the contrary: “The dependence of men

upon the reproductive and nurturing powers of women assures the latter an important source of control: mutual dependence implies a mutual independence. Women have an exclusive realm of activity and hence an exclusive domain of control and influence. Moreover, they can subvert political alliances and aggravate divisions within the male hierarchy through the manipulation of their childreens loyalties. . . . [T]hese bonds of mutual dependence uniting men and women ... outline some of the sources, characteristics and limitations of male domination and authority.”²⁵

Jean Buxton, explaining women's position in Mandari society largely in the context of their reproductive capacity observed that “there is ... a direct connection between the high status of women and the explicit ideology,” but that “the ideal of female value is often contradicted in daily life by the ambivalence inherent in actual male/female relationships. Further, Mandari women, though displaying dignity of person, independent-mindedness, and influence, are, from the point of view of property-ownership and the exercise of political power, much less advantageously placed than men. Greater creative importance is balanced by subordination in executive affairs and femininity involves paradoxes alien to the simpler maleness.”²⁶

The bottom line, however, is that there were significant inequalities in the value-institutional structures and processes of traditional Nilotic society. As society was stratified along the lines of descent, age, and gender, distributional patterns were structured along those lines as well. Leaders descended from predetermined lineages; elders predominated over youth and men over women. Positive and negative traits were attributed to the structural position of the individual or the group in the hierarchy with the privileged reflecting a higher degree of conformity to the ideals and the disadvantaged popularly perceived as depicting negative traits. As representatives of the ancestors and the deities, the chiefs symbolized the ideals of the social order; elders stood in close association with the spiritual leaders in upholding the ideals; young people displayed the aggressiveness from which they derived their dignity; and women were revered as mothers who nurtured life, particularly in the womb and in

infancy, and were valued as sources of wealth distribution through bride price in marriage, but were also criticized for an alleged propensity toward jealousy and divisiveness that threatened the unity of the larger family and the clan.

These values and practices are the cornerstones of Nilotic identity, cohesiveness, and cultural continuity. As alternatives were limited,

conformity was the general pattern. Nevertheless, in extreme instances, individuals and groups might disaffiliate themselves and move to settle elsewhere. In fact, anthropologists attribute the segmentary lineage system that is so characteristic of Nilotic society to this process of disaffiliation and segmentation. Even then, the ancestral values of the clan system are preserved, and affiliation with the clan is maintained. While new subdivisions might emerge, the rules of exogamy for example, which prohibit marriage among members of the clan, however distant the relationship, are still observed.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE VALUE SYSTEM

The foregoing Nilotic value system is somewhat similar to the Arab-Islamic system of the North, but with contrasts that keep it on a parallel course. The most important and pervasive implication of this value system is that it gives the eternal issues of religion — the origin and the destiny of life — a worldly orientation that makes the people intensely religious, ethical, and moral, constantly preoccupied with the word of God, fearful of committing wrong, by commission, omission, or inadvertence.

According to the Seligmans, “The Dinka, and their kindred the Nuer, are by far the most religious peoples in the Sudan.”²⁷ As Lienhardt observed, “Divinity [meaning God] is held ultimately to reveal truth and falsehood, and in doing so provides a sanction for justice between men. Cruelty, lying, cheating, and all other forms of injustice are hated by Divinity, and the Dinka suppose that, in some way, if concealed by men, they will be revealed by him.”²⁸

A deep sense of pride in their race and culture, which approximates ethnocentrism and fosters in them a conservative approach to change, is also implicit in the Nilotics' view of themselves and their heritage. They have a subjective sense of self-esteem that does not impose racism on others, nor does it want to be imposed upon.

A third and equally important implication of the segmentary lineage system is a deep sense of autonomy not only for the groups at various

levels of the social structure, but also down to the individual. The Nilotics are uncompromisingly resentful of coercive authority and any interference with their independence and freedom. This has been a major problem in the democratic process, since every Nilote sees himself as entitled to lead and subordinate to none.

A fourth implication, which may sound contradictory to the Nilotics' spirit of egalitarianism but is not, is the importance the people attach to the notion of leadership. Their respect for a worthy leader quickly approximates spiritual veneration, linked with ancestral legacy, real or assumed. In the traditional order of things, there was no room whatsoever for an authoritarian leader, except through the awe of spiritual power that could be effective only if morally justified.

A fifth implication, a corollary of the Nilotic sense of uniqueness, is the aversion to assimilation by others. This does not mean that individuals in a foreign context are not adaptable, but rather that the society as a whole is prone to the preservation of its ethnic and cultural identity. The Nilotics practice exogamy; prohibiting marriages among relatives by blood and affinity but their resistance to assimilation implies opposition to tribally and racially mixed marriages. Their attitude in this respect does not differ much from that of the Muslim North, but their prejudice against mixed marriage is not given the degree of recognition or significance accorded to the religiously ordained prejudice of the Muslim communities since it is regarded as mere convention or tradition.

Pride in race and culture are, needless to say, shared to an even greater degree by the Arabs. It is no exaggeration to say that the incompatibility may not be due so much to the differences as to the similarities of otherwise parallel systems of values and institutions. One major difference worth emphasis is that the Nilotics, unlike the Arabs, do not wish to impose their culture and beliefs on others. The ethnocentrism of Nilotic self-image is based on feelings of distinctiveness as a people rather than on assumptions of domination and superiority over others, except insofar as they take themselves as the standard of what is normal in God's creation of humankind and its dignity. Having been dominated and ruled by others and having seen the technological superiority of others over them, the Nilotics have developed sentiments of human worth that are more in the realm of moral and spiritual than of material values.

BOUNDARIES OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

An extraordinary feature of the social systems in the southern Sudan is that traditional communities have retained a cohesiveness and a

sense of solidarity and pride in their indigenous identity that has defied pressures for assimilation into the Arab Muslim North. This is the outcome of a history that sowed the seeds of chronic animosity and developed an identity of resistance that has now blossomed in a crisis of national identity.

What the South experienced at the hands of the Arabized Islamic North is not unique to the peoples of the South, for it also affected other non-Arab communities in the marginal regions of the North. What is unique, however, is that the people of the South, at least those who remained, have reinforced their sense of identity and pride through their successful resistance and have remained free from slavery and domination. What is often overlooked by the Arab North and should be recalled here is that the northerners who look down on the Negroid races of the South as slaves are, in significant numbers, themselves the result of mixing with slaves from the South. Those blacks who remained in the South have not experienced enslavement and are therefore free from the psychology of slavery. One northern scholar who is committed to the Arab-Islamic identity of the North went as far as intimating that southerners have a "healthier" attitude on race issues than northerners because they have not suffered the complexes of assimilation based on racial superiority and inferiority.²⁹

Before the modern era brought them into a social context in which they are ranked low, southern peoples certainly entertained a sense of at least equality with any other people. To a large extent they even felt culturally and morally superior, judging by their reactions to the Arab slave raiders, whose practice of slavery they considered morally depraved and alien to their own values. Although they captured Arabs in retaliation for the slave raids, they adopted them as family members and did not treat them as slaves. And because of what they regarded as a moral void among the Arabs, their opinion of them as God-fearing human beings was very low. Judging on moral bases, the world for them was clearly divided between their own and the world beyond. In their own world certain idealized standards of human relations were upheld, if not fully observed, while the outside world was perceived as hostile territory where warfare prevailed

and the ideals of the social order were violated. This division calls to mind the Muslim division of the world into lands of peace and war, but while the Muslims were perceived as the aggressors against the non-Muslims, the Nilotics saw themselves as fighting the aggressors.

This moral dichotomy comes across very strongly in Dinka folktales, which divide the world into that of humans, conceived as Monyjang, literally “the People,” the Dinka word for themselves, and that of animals, usually lions.³⁰ Any human being whose behavior violates the fundamental norms of the Dinka code of conduct beyond a certain point becomes transformed into an animal. This is reflected in the growth of hair on the body the emergence of a tail, and a voracious appetite for raw meat. Depending on the degree of violation, such a person could be redeemed by severe punishment, such as beating, and reformed into a human being again. But in cases considered beyond redemption, such people are condemned and ruthlessly and remorselessly killed, even by close relatives. In most cases, the transformation into animal behavior results from contacts and relationships with members of the lion-world — outsiders — who are believed to exert a corrupting influence on human beings.

That the so-called animals were foreigners from hostile camps is obvious in the human form that the lions are supposed to exhibit under normal circumstances, taking on the animal form only when they become vicious and turn wild. Furthermore, these human-lions are sometimes represented as traveling on horses, which are associated with Arab traders from the North. The themes of these tales therefore recall the nineteenth-century upheavals when the world was spoiled, devastated by slave raiders who were alien to the norms of decent relations among human beings.

Initial resistance against British conquest was replaced by admiration as the Sudanese saw that the indirect rule permitted them to lead their traditional life. Southerners favored them over their fellow northern Sudanese. They even identified the British with their own moral values more than they did the Arabs, despite the distance between them in race, culture, and place of origin. The disparity in development and the contrasting levels of respect that the British maintained between the North and the South became significant only when the two were thrust together in an unqualified unitary system in an independent Sudan without constitutional protection for the disadvantaged communities. The

discrepancies of the power process were matched by disparities in all other fields. The traditional southerner, faced with the increasing dominance of the Arab Muslim identity within the new framework of the nation-state, is becoming less self-confident and basically defensive.

After the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, Dinka leaders were asked how they saw the prospects of national integration. The responses were striking.³¹ Chief Biong Mijak saw the differences between the Arabs of the North and the Africans in the South as inherent and sacrosanct:

"Those people are brown and we are black. God did not create man at random. He created each people with their own kind. He created ... some people brown and some black. We cannot say we want to destroy what God created; all this is in God's hands. Even God would get angry if we spoiled his work."³²

Bulabek Malith recalled the suffering that the Arabs had inflicted on the black man as having created an insurmountable obstacle to Arab-African unity and integration: "The things the Arab has done in our country, including things which we have been told about by our elders, are many. A man called Kergaak Piyin, an elder ... used to tell us the stories of our country's destruction. He said, 'Children, as I sit here, I wish that any future destruction of the country does not find me alive. Arabs are bad. Before they kill you, they cut your muscles to make you an invalid who cannot walk; they put stone grinders on your hands and ask you to grind grain [kneeling down] and then ... they put a thorn on the tip of a stick and give it to a small child to prick your testicles as you grind the grain.'"³³

Like Biong Mijak, Bulabek Malith regards these objectionable traits in the Arabs as ingrained in their racial and cultural makeup, and he therefore rules out any basis for genuine unity. "If they were a people who could abandon their vile manners, they would have abandoned them a long time ago. But these are a people whom God created in their own way. . . . Even if people became really equal and the South gets educated and has full freedom, the way elders like us see it in their hearts, it seems they will one day separate. The Northerner is a person you cannot say will one day mix with the Southerner to the point where the blood of the Southerner and the blood of the Arab will become one."³⁴

Most respondents, building on the bitter history of the past, saw the peace that had been achieved in 1972 as an interlude to be watched and

monitored carefully. Chief Thon Wai, following that line of thought, also considers it difficult to predict unity and prefers a wait-and-see attitude. "So, we and our brothers, the time when we will unite and live together is known to God alone. We will not say it ourselves. Why won't we say it? It is because we have had some experience."³⁵

Thon Wai goes on to express his view that the South and North are so different that they must maintain a certain distance to remain at peace. "Our life with the North is like that of a cold egg and a hot egg. The sun is hot; the sun is hot and the moon is cold. They keep their distance from one another. They do not meet. They act as though they are about to meet but they miss one another."³⁶

According to Chief Albino Akot, even though the future is difficult to determine, there is too much cultural diversity for integration between the South and the North to be effectively realized. "For the North and South to mix, so that they become one people, a people with one language and one religion, this is a very difficult question. . . . They cannot be one people. Why? Because there are no common ways between them, no social contacts ... and no common culture between them."³⁷

Deng Riny, an educated Dinka, was explicit on the prejudiced attitude of his people against the Arabs. "The idea of an Arab coming and marrying among the Dinka will not be accepted. Each man sees himself as superior. The Arabs see themselves as superior and the Dinka see themselves as superior. In this case, it is difficult to see how they will mix. But if people become equal so that there is no poor and there is no rich, and Arabs do not see the Dinka as poor and the Dinka do not see the Arabs as inferior, then they could approach one another as equals."³⁸

Chief Giir Thiik concurred: "That you will intermarry and mix to be one people, I cannot see. . . . You will live together, but there will be South and North. Even living together is only possible if you people handle the situation well. There are many people who appear to be one, but inside them they remain two. I think that is how you will live. A man has one head and one neck, but he has two legs to stand on."³⁹

These views were recorded at a time when the South was governed under an autonomous system that still subordinated the region to the central government. In contrast to the tragic suffering that occurred during the civil war, however, autonomy brought a relief to the South that was initially euphoric. But Southern government leaders had limited

resources available to them for administering the region. They realized that their own positions ultimately depended on the central government and particularly on the president, so they relied heavily on favors acquired through personal connections with the center. Autonomy soon became only the take-off position in a centripetal process

that probably would have succeeded in applying the northern model of Arabization and Islamization had Nimeiri not unwittingly dismantled that ingenious mechanism for national integration and ultimate assimilation. Alerted and saved by Nimeiri's overkill instincts, the South emerged and reasserted itself under the leadership of the SPLM-SPLA, with an agenda that transcended the traditional family-and lineage-oriented concepts of identity to offer the nation a broad-based framework that supposedly would be free of discrimination based on family, tribe, race, religion, culture, or gender. This goal may be utopian in the context of North-South relations, but the elements involved compose the essentials of a modern democratic secular nation-state, whether that be a united Sudan or an independent South.

CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN CULTURE

Northerners mostly dwell on the separatist policies of the British and especially the encouragement of a southern identity based on traditional systems with the modern influence of Christianity and Western culture. Their remedy is to try to undo this history through Arabization and Islamization, to remove the Christian Western influence, and to integrate the country along the lines of the northern model. What they do not realize is that traditional identity and Christian Western influence have combined to consolidate and strengthen a modern southern identity of resistance against Islamization and Arabization. Forced assimilation is no longer possible, if it ever was.

The advent of Christianity was closely associated with colonialism. Although the Anglo-Egyptian administration was essentially secular and maintained a relatively neutral position on matters of religion, it permitted and even encouraged Christian missionary societies to operate within defined spheres of influence in the southern Sudan, where they offered educational and medical services.⁴⁰

One of the most effective ways in which the Christian message was articulated and promoted in the South was through schoolchildren's songs, composed by older boys or southern teachers. These were sung by the pupils collectively with all the social, cultural, and aesthetic

gratification that the society traditionally associated with singing and dancing. Schoolchildren viewed themselves in traditional terms as an age-set of warriors with the pen for the spear and the school as a cattle

camp. Competing along tribal lines in much the same way their traditional counterparts did, they marched, drilled, and otherwise glorified in singing displays in which they exalted their newly acquired skills, wisdom, and status with an exhibitionist self-esteem, alternately referring to themselves as “I” or “we,” all characteristic of the individual-communal dynamics of traditional society.⁴¹

Initially there was a strong resistance to sending children to school, not only because of fear of cultural alienation, symbolized by the fact that schoolchildren became known as “the children of the missionaries,” but also because of fear of moral degeneration. In the words of Godfrey Lienhardt, although baptism, described as “blessed with God's water,” was an idea quite familiar to Dinka in their own religious practice, “missionized Dinka were seen as belonging to another kind of family different from their natal family, and when away from it, forming a community with customs, and linguistic usages, of their own. Then ‘the children of the missionaries’ were fed and brought up by the missionaries instead of their own parents. A redefinition of vernacular terms makes possible the construction of a framework of reference coming from Dinka family life, now applied to the Church, seen as a kind of family but not a Dinka family.”⁴²

As Lilian and Neville Sanderson have observed, the skills needed for the traditional context and the offerings of modern education were inherently conflictual. “Of what practical use was education to a young Nilotic? There was no indigenous role that it could improve his capacity to fill; on the contrary by restricting his opportunities to learn, by observation and experience, the skills of a highly specialised transhumant pastoralist and of a warrior, it diseducated him for the fundamental roles of an adult male.”⁴³

Slowly the value of education began to make itself felt. So miraculous was writing and reading that education represented a revolution in knowledge and the power accruing from it. But consistent with the combined colonial and Christian mission of maintaining law and order and “civilizing” the “natives,” the educated youth, unlike their traditional

counterparts, who prided themselves on physical courage and obstreperousness as warriors, saw their dignity in obedience and orderliness. Yet their new source of knowledge symbolized a revolutionary reversal of roles, for in traditional society knowledge was presumed to accumulate with age and the proximity to the ancestors. The new code of learning made traditional southerners feel that they not

only had a great deal to learn, but should be ashamed of where they stood in the newly postulated scale of values and progress.

The premise of Christian missionary education was that before the advent of Christianity and the enlightenment that accompanied it, the people were immersed in the abyss of intellectual, moral, and spiritual darkness or emptiness. Christian teachings promised to provide the remedy and the path to salvation. Notions of individual and collective well-being were molded to embody a new concept that welded the traditional Dinka view of worldly well-being with the Christian doctrine of salvation.

Southerners saw the Christian mission as a source of literacy and modern skills rather than the adoption of a new spiritual order. Even modern medicine was appreciated gradually as its results were demonstrated to be superior to traditional practices. Godfrey Lienhardt has noted that initially "the Nilotics regarded the missionaries like all foreigners as inferior to themselves in all but technological and medical skills, and were as secure in their own standards as the missionaries in theirs." 44 But in due course, "the missionary presence became valued for its contribution in education which the people slowly realized was necessary for their well-being and their cultural and political survival. The Dinka became increasingly aware that much though they might have preferred to live without external interference in their traditional mode of life, that interference had already begun to endanger their independence. They saw that they needed enough of their own people capable of thinking in foreign ways, of meeting foreigners on their own ground while remaining Dinka in their loyalties, to understand and circumvent encroachments on their own autonomy."45

Although Dinka traditional religion was condemned as a source of evil from which Christian education was the saving grace, missionaries recognized and made use of the traditional social hierarchies, the chiefs, to reach their people with the Christian message. A number of prominent chiefs from Bahr al-Ghazal province were even flown to Rome to meet the pope and, according to popular conception, to seek his blessing for

their people.

Although the Nilotics have a relativist view of religion that recognizes the significance of the lineage values in man's relationship to the divine order, they believe that humankind as a totality is subject to the one supreme power of God, and it is He, in their view, who creates and destroys all human beings, irrespective of race or religion. Because

of the combination of their religious devotion with the universality of their conception of God's relationship to man, what matters most to the Dinka is not so much which religion one adheres to as how religious one is. A holy man who appears to reflect unusual spiritual powers and divine will is revered as a man of God capable of rewarding good and punishing evil. Christian missionaries had the distinct advantage of being seen as people who were there for the sole purpose of spreading the word of God and doing good among humankind. Even the designation of the Catholic priests as fathers was well suited to Dinka notions of spiritual leadership. In the references to the bishop or the priest, which have been translated as lord or master to suit the Western Christian context, the word used in local language is beny, the same term they apply to their divine chiefs. Their functions were also viewed as comparable.

Many of the schoolchildren's songs were in fact personal exaltations of the missionaries as benefactors in all the values associated with well-being and moral order, conceived in the context of the new notions of "going ahead," or "progress." In the local cultural perspective, "that idea of progress was quite foreign. There was little evidence that life had ever been different from what it was today, nor, until the coming of the Europeans, that it was ever going to change in the future. But by the 1940s, it had become apparent to many thoughtful Dinka that in lacking education their people were lacking some of the essential skills for political survival in the modern Sudan, and they came to accept the idea that they were in some ways which put them at a disadvantage in the modern world, backward."⁴⁶

While the benefits of education and the values of the Christian faith were major themes of schoolchildren's songs, an equally preoccupying, even obsessive, concern was with the supposedly inherent evils and dangers of non-Christian life and social conditions. The evil spirits of traditional religion and Muhammadanism, which was morally equated with paganism, were seen as posing a serious threat to physical and spiritual well-being. Christianity was extolled as the only tool of redemption:

Father, our master

The land is threatened by the pagans

The land is threatened by the Mohammedans

O what will the Christians do?

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I turn this way, and it is the fetish Mathiang Guk And Mohammedans are facing East They are facing where the sun rises.

What misfortune, what misfortune!

We are entangled with bad spirits ...

Some inflict evil spells

Some are evil-eyed who disturb the innocent in the land The land held by
the Bishop The land held by Edward [Mason]

The land is confused

The land has its head in a knot.⁴⁷

As the fruits of education continued to materialize in the form of increasing employment opportunities and political participation in the modern state, cultural traits of Christian missionary influence began to be gradually assimilated as part of the inevitable process of modernization, with all its contradictory advantages and social disruption. The traditional elders were increasingly threatened and disturbed not so much by the religious transformation of the youth, which they did not take seriously, but by the more blatant disregard for traditional knowledge and for the wisdom of the elders. One elder expressed the indignation of his peers in these words: "Educated boys have pushed us aside as if there is nothing we know. Even if an elder says the big things of his country, they say, 'there is nothing you know.' How can there be nothing we know when we are their fathers? Did we not bear them ourselves? When we put them in school, we thought they would learn new things to add to what we, their elders, would pass on to them. We hoped they would listen to our words and then add to them the new words of learning. But now it is said that there is nothing we know. This has really saddened our hearts very much."⁴⁸

The Christian missionaries were sensitive to the local cultural context, but it would be too idealistic to say that both sides understood one another in a profound way and sought to reinforce each other's values and institutions through a process of equitable cross-cultural fertilization. Nilotic values and institutions were so deeply rooted and resilient because of the people's conservatism and pride in their race and culture that they persisted despite the onslaught of missionary intervention. In this process, the Nilotics were on the lower end of Western acculturation, and eventually their traditional self-image be-

gan to erode, albeit subtly. In fact, the process was not dissimilar to the Arabization and Islamization of the North.

The irony is that the British colonial administration and the Christian missionaries made an effective use of this eclectic process through a more conscious policy than the national governments have done since independence, when the two value systems came into more direct confrontation and conflict. The result has been that the Nilotic sense of pride and independence has been more blatantly infringed upon since independence than was the case under the British and missionary influence.

Apart from these processes of change, Christian education in the South had fostered a new sense of identity that transcended tribal loyalties and created a southern nationalist sentiment that was both intrinsic and anti-North. As one of the southern intellectual and political leaders has observed, "Southerners, at least those who are educated, have come to live together in schools, have worked together and have shared some political objectives for which tribal differences were played down to give an appearance of unity. Differences with northern Sudan were conceived as differences with Arabs, and were therefore differences with an outsider — perhaps even an enemy ... trying to impose his religion (Islam), his culture and indeed many times his political and military will on the people of the South. The more militant the attitude of a Southerner to the North was, the more he professed to hate everything connected with it — the more he was accepted as a [Southern] nationalist. . . ."49

To appreciate the motivation behind the policies of Arabization and Islamization by which successive governments tried to undermine the influence of Christianity and Western culture, it should be understood that as far as the North was concerned, the South was the legitimate domain of Arab-Islamic influence, which the missionaries in alliance with British colonial rulers had wrongly usurped. But the North was also convinced that the roots of the Christian Western influence were shallow and could easily be replaced with Islam and Arab culture. As noted earlier, the northern administration in the South was not colonial, but the great

majority of southerners regarded it as such.⁵⁰ A southern author has written of the northern attitude toward the South at independence, "Many northern Sudanese had the notion that there were but a bunch of uncivilised tribes in the South and very condescendingly Northerners regarded themselves as guardians of these,

their backward brethren. Finding themselves in charge of the government of an independent Sudan, northern Sudanese politicians and administrators sought to replace the colonial regime in the South with their own. Arabic was naturally to replace English and what better religion than Islam could replace Christianity?"⁵¹

PLURALISM AND THE DIMINISHING SELF-IMAGE

As the South became incorporated in the modern context of the nation-state, more opportunities arose for individual members to move on in the path of progress through education, employment, and labor migration. Southerners, specifically the Nilotics who had been the most resistant to change, realized the inferiority of their situation as judged by the new criteria. Many of them began to adjust rapidly to the demands of modernity to a degree that should surprise those supporters of the theory of Nilotic conservatism and resistance to change. One can indeed hypothesize that the same values of pride and dignity that had made them resist change may well provide them with the motivation to enhance their status and self-image through radical change. Change was despised when it did not offer convincing evidence of self-improvement, and it was embraced when it became the obvious way toward dignity by the newly postulated standards.

While the benefits of change affected a relatively narrow group within the community, it was more widely accepted that the traditional culture and way of life were indeed inferior. The subordinated masses, seeing that they were discriminated against as inferior by those wielding superior power, turned this value judgment into a truism. With no prospects for proving it unfounded, this gradually became internalized into the belief system to give it a convincing explanation. In the traditional cosmology everything has an intrinsic meaning ultimately related to the origin of things and the manifestation of God's will. Therefore, the impact of the power hierarchy on their culture and the weight of discriminatory practices began to deepen and expand into a worldview. While this is still in its formative stages, it is profoundly disorienting for a people who had assumed superiority as God's chosen people.

Dunstan Wai has described the conditions of discrimination and humiliation under which the southerners live in modern Sudan and its

effect on them: "Patterns of social and economic discrimination reinforced the minority status of the Southern Sudanese within the independent Republic of the Sudan. Their political weakness in turn reinforced their social and economic patterns. . . . Their day-to-day lives offered them little hope in a united Sudan. They perceived themselves to be socially and economically deprived in comparison with the North. And they suffered humiliation." Wai goes on to describe one form of southern reaction to this treatment: "As the propensity of the North to engage in discrimination, oppression, and violence against the South increased, the Southerners felt that since there was no justice in the political system, there was no legitimate state and no obligation to obey."⁵²

Another form of reaction is more subtle, difficult to gauge, but arguably more damaging in the South in the long run, and that is a pathetic resignation to the imposition of the inferior status and a need to explain it. The Nilotics, being both traditionally the proudest and the most backward in modern material terms, seem to have begun to scrutinize their old values and to be adjusting their sentiments toward a greater responsiveness to the challenges of modernization.

They also appear to be undergoing a process of self-evaluation in comparison with others, specifically the Arabs and the Europeans. A body of oral literature has begun to emerge among the Dinka in which they are beginning to rationalize their position. This newly emerging attitude is beginning to result in a novel reinterpretation of myths of ancient origin. One myth, initially the reason for their proud acquisition of cattle as the most noble symbol of wealth, is now being seen more as an explanation of their fateful devotion to cattle, attributed to their original choice of the cow in preference to the thing called "what," which God offered them as a better alternative, but which they dismissed without even seeing. This circumstance is explained by understanding that the Dinka word for "what" — "ngo" — may be used as a statement when a person hands something to another person; the do-nor would not specify what the thing was, and the recipient would not know unless he or she could see the thing as it is handed over. Used in this sense, then, "ngo" would imply "Have this," without saying what "this" is. Both as a question

and as a statement, “ngo” signifies something unknown but about which curiosity is assumed. According to the Dinka myth, “rigo” was later given to Europeans and the Arabs and presumably became the source of their inquisitiveness and scientific invention, the source of their material superiority and power.

Another myth explains that the black man was relegated to a status inferior to his white and brown brothers because his mother favored him, forcing their father to plead with God to help take care of the disadvantaged children. The myth recalls the tension between the subordination of women and their pivotal influence. Bulabek Malith and Loth Adija recount the story with only small variations. According to Bulabek:

What our grandfathers used to say ... is that ... man was created ... as twins. One was a brown child and one was a black child. The woman would keep the black child to herself, away from the father. Whenever the father came to see the children, she would present the brown child and keep the black child because she loved the black child very much.

The man said, "This child whom you keep away from me, in the future, when [the children] grow up, I will not show him my secrets! That has remained a curse on us. It is because of this story which we have been told by our fathers that we have been deprived. Our father did not show us the ways of our ancestors fully. . . . It was the woman who kept her black child away from his father. Otherwise, we would have known more things than we know.⁵³

Loth's version of the myth speaks of triplets and includes a white child, who apparently was the most disadvantaged of the three, suckled last and least. "As he was prevented from sucking, his father took good care to feed him. He took a gourd, a new fresh gourd ... raised his hands to the sky and prayed, "God, is there nothing for you to give to this son of mine? That gourd was filled with milk. That white son ... drank the milk. [His father] took [him] ... to be the servant of God. That is said to be how the English went away and learned. Arab and Dinka remained."⁵⁴ As the brown child was also not treated well by his mother, his father took him and gave him to God. "The Arab came and found his education according to the word God had said to the woman, 'The [black] child you now favour will one day become the slave of my children.' [The Arab] found the horse ... with [which] he went to capture ... the descendants of his brother who was denied education by God. And when he captured them, he made

them slaves.”⁵⁵

Religiously devout as they are, the Nilotics are thus inclined to find

spiritual rationalizations for their racial, cultural, and even economic subordination in the context of an independent Sudan. In the following verses, the poet-singer attributes the hardships of urban labor to the inequitable distribution of resources among the races at the time of creation.

God hates us for the things of the past.

The ancient things he created with us in the Byre of Creation, When he gave the black man the cow To crawl out onto the shores of the river, Leaving behind the Grain and the Book of his father, Our curse goes to the elders of the original land; The man who threw the Book away,

It is he who gave us into slavery.

The evidence reflected in this reinterpretation of the myths can also be discerned more directly in other forms of oral literature. For instance, the Nilotics traditionally did not doubt their superiority, which they believed went back to creation, even though they also acknowledged the importance of respecting all God's creatures, especially human beings. Now they plead for equal treatment on the basis of the inherent equality of all human beings. One song has in its lines: No one was bad when God created us No one was bad when the Creator created us No one was bad when the power above created us No one was bad when people emerged from the Byre of Creation We were all equal

I swear by death, we are all children of the One Adam Mohamed and Deng, Dinka and Arab, I swear by death, we are all children of the One Adam Another song refers to the bad treatment the Dinka are receiving from the Arabs and contrasts it to the favored position of the black color of skin at creation, ultimately addressing his complaint to God: Our land is closed in a prison cell The Arabs have spoiled our land

Spoiled our land with bearded [bren] guns ...

Is the black color of skin such [a bad] thing

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That the Government should draw its guns?

The police pacing up and down, Gunners causing dust to rise, Cowards
surrendering to the arms? ...

South of Deng, son of Kwol, What the Government is doing Is not a good
thing;

Waving their bren-guns ...

Counting their [empty] shells Then saying, "One million shots Have not
subdued the Ngok [Dinka]."

Our case is in the Court with the people above The Court is convened
between the clouds ...

[Our ancestral spirits]

Have a cause.

They seated the Court

And called God

Then said, "God, why are you doing this?

Don't you see what has become of the black skin?"⁵⁶

The fact that the Nilotics are also beginning to travel widely and are seeing the plight of peoples of dark skin elsewhere is adding to their self-doubt. Nilotics comment on this, only half in jest, wondering rhetorically what the black man has done wrong to God, that he should be subjected to indignities throughout the world. This self-demeaning recognition of the inferior status of blacks in the world seems to be more manifest among the older uneducated people, however. For the educated youth, it seems to be more a source of light humor than acceptance of an inferior status. Quite the contrary, the educated young people appear to be balancing between a lingering sense of superiority, especially when they compare themselves with the Arabs, and a recognition of their status in the modern national context, which they appear to see as posing a challenge for them through the struggle for equality. The struggle for political equality is only the first step in a more inclusive challenge of self-advancement economically, socially, and culturally.

The important feature of these trends is that they envisage southerners in terms of racial, ethnic, or cultural identity, people with a past that has fed into their present status and poses specific challenges for the future. They do not see the victims of political, economic, social,

and cultural subordination merely as individuals who must strive on their own to improve their lot. They see the plight of the individual as part and parcel of a collective identity that is intrinsic to their race and ethnic group. The rights they demand are therefore more than individual; they are ultimately collective.

These emerging themes in oral literature certainly reveal something of a watershed between the high profile of pride and dignity for which the Nilotics have always been known and the new realities of the modern context in which they occupy an unquestionably subordinate position. Godfrey Lienhardt has analyzed the process by which the Dinka, who had taken their superiority for granted, came to accept a significant degree of inferiority. "The Dinka view of age-sets, based upon a cyclical notion of local history, begins to be displaced by a dynamic view of history, accompanied by a philosophy of progress, and with teleological overtones."⁵⁷ While that shift may not explain the dynamic interplay between cultures, it begins to impose a dichotomy between the supposedly outmoded tradition and the highly valued incoming modernity. As Lienhardt explains, " 'Getting ahead' begins to be directed towards some distant, more universal end, defined in foreign terms." This would be a form of society based on a foreign model rather than one conceived of by the Dinka.⁵⁸

Despite this fundamental shift in perception, both the colonial regime and the Christian missionaries ostensibly tried to develop the people within their own context and along traditional lines. There can be no question about the amount of energy from traditional culture that the missionaries were able to tap within the context of colonial policies to maximize the contribution of the local population to their own development, modest as it was. With independence and redefinition of the national character to give prominence to Arab-Islamic culture, the Nilotics had to deal with yet another stereotype of racial, religious, and cultural concepts of development. In this version the Arab-Muslim identity replaced the European-Christian as the official model for progress, and southerners were subordinated to it as a disadvantaged and subservient minority.

THE QUEST FOR REDEMPTION

In response to this new challenge, southern resistance appears to be taking two forms, one religious and the other military. Both forms are

mobilized for the redemption of a people who have endured more than they can withstand any longer. During the seventeen-year war (1955-72) and extending into the present war, the conditions of upheaval, intense insecurity, and massive suffering from starvation and violent death have nudged southerners increasingly toward religion in general and toward Christianity in particular as a source of salvation. Several factors account for this, among them a natural yearning for supernatural protection against an otherwise incomprehensible destruction; a search for alternative interpretations as the traditional belief system becomes discredited; a response to the Church as a source of material, social, and spiritual support in contrast to national leaders; and, not least, the need for a coherent competing modern religious identity with which to oppose the Arab-Islamic identity.

In the late 1950s, when the overall impact of disruptive change was still somewhat diffuse, the religious reaction had a more traditional character. Among the Ngok Dinka, for instance, a young man from the leading Pajok clan who became possessed by the ancestral spirits as a medium for reform called on the paramount chief to make appropriate sacrifices to God and the spirits to ask for their help. A hymn announcing his mission included these lines: Our eyes are tearing with misery Big Chief, pray to God; Our buttocks have shrivelled (with starvation) Big Chief, pray to God Should dances be held only at night (from embarrassment) As though they were the dances of ghosts?

O, big Chief, pray to God.

One of the most traumatic manifestations of the religious reaction to the misery the southern masses have endured was an incident in which a religious leader was reported to have killed his own son as a sacrifice to God so that his people might be redeemed from suffering. The man was arrested and tried by an SPLM court, found guilty of murder as a deterrent, but because of mitigating circumstances, was pardoned and released.⁵⁹ Even this man's action can be seen as a dynamic fusion of traditional religious values and practices with Christian themes.

⁵⁹ "The Dinka of the South," in *The Dinka of the South*, ed. by the author (London, 1978), p. 100.

Ironically while the traditional elders initially dismissed the Christian concept of everlasting life as a mere superstition, converts found the idea of both the perfection of heaven and the doom of hell most

compelling. The traditional notion was that after death life continued in some ill-defined spiritual form. This left the threat of perishing into nothingness not adequately resolved, and it was precisely why the Nilotics remained in awe of death. As the number of converts increased and the work of the Christian mission spread, the optimistic view of the life hereafter began to take hold.

Rev. Marc Nikkel, a Protestant missionary, made a study of the contemporary religious changes among the Dinka. He analyzed a collection of religious songs composed to inculcate “the determination to survive by affirming that even out of suffering, positive elements are derived.”⁶⁰ One song explicitly refutes Dinka fear of death as an end and sees it more as a transition to a better life.

Death has come to reveal the faith.

It has begun in our time and it will end in our time.

You who fear the end of your life, do not fear death: For it only means that you will disappear from the face of the earth.

Who is there who can defend his life and leave death aside?

We who live in the world, we are mere visitors upon the earth.⁶¹

The lamentation of the suffering in this world is contrasted with the hope in everlasting salvation through God's supreme justice: Let us comfort our hearts in the hope of God who once breathed life into the human body.

His ears are open to our prayer;

the Creator of man is alert to see!

He reigns from his high throne; he sees the souls of those who die.

Turn your ears to us! To whom else can we go for help?

You are the only one!

Let us be branches from the vine of your son!

Jesus will come with the final word of judgment upon the earth, He comes bearing the book of peace and the life of faith.⁶²

The Nilotics of course have always turned to God and the spirits for protection at times of exceptional disasters; prophets have traditionally emerged under such circumstances. But as war and famine have disrupted society on a massive scale and traditional ways have been progressively undermined, more universalizing concepts that can address

these problems are needed. According to the Christian missionary leaders, the Church is meeting the need, not only by offering that universal vision, but also by creating broader circles of identification and unity. The shift is now extending into discrediting the spiritual leaders of traditional society, some of whom are reported to be moving with the tide and joining Christianity.

Nikkel explains the manner in which the process widens loyalties and unity of purpose: "As some localized powers capitulate before Nhialic [God], so too do delineations between various human groups in a time of unprecedented displacement and increasing encounters with distant peoples. The diminishing authority of hereditary powers accompanies what many Christians see as an expression of the positive, unifying authority of the Christian Gospel."⁶³

While this process is seen to undermine tradition, it also empowers the people in a manner that ultimately ensures a sense of optimism and confidence in their ability to overcome tragedy and this in turn ensures their survival as a people and as a society. This is particularly visible in the way the Church provides a rallying ground for the displaced southerners, especially in northern cities. The clubs that the Church makes available to them provide religious instruction, offer literacy classes and other social services, and allow them to develop broader-based relationships and a sense of unity. Nikkel conceptualizes this situation in terms of Dinka perceptions of being orphaned and the moral demand on the Church to provide the orphans with protection. The Dinka do, indeed, view the loss of their indigenous leadership, and worse, the destruction of their social order, as being orphaned. According to their traditional value system, being an orphan is an exceptionally deprived condition, which imposes a strong moral obligation for the family and the leadership to provide appropriate affectional and material remedies.

People are crying out all over the earth: "Lord, do not make us orphans of the land.

Turn and look upon us, O Creator of humankind.

Evil is fighting among us!

The burdens tied upon our necks are impossible for us to bear!"⁶⁴

"Just as frequent is the sense of being cut off, orphaned or neglected by the wider human community, and possibly even by God, the Creator

himself. So alarming is this experience of an abandoned and dispossessed people that even the natural order finds voice to express its horror.”⁶⁵ A song composed by a pastor from Bor follows the same theme: Pay attention to me you Lord of heaven and earth for the love of the person whom you created.

The person who shoulders his spears alone, I am in the sinful land of Sudan
The birds in the sky are surprised by the way I have been orphaned
The animals of the forest

are startled by my skeleton.⁶⁶

The Dinka appear to be seeing these conflicting emotions as reflected in the biblical prophecy in Isaiah 18, which has often been quoted by scholars as evidence of the Nilotic link with the Biblical tradition.⁶⁷ It is also cited as evidence of long historical association between the Nilotic world and the wider world context of the Nile Valley and the Middle East. But there is a popular and increasing tendency for the peoples of the South to see in this chapter a prophetic universal statement of both their tragedy and their ultimate glory. For the southerners, the optimistic prophecy in verses 6 and 7 is not only appealing, but also empowering, as it dramatizes both the level of devastation and the promise of salvation: “They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them,, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.” But then “shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts ... to ... the mount Zion.”

The people believe, and they are reinforced in this by the Christian gospel, that they have suffered enough and that their salvation is now at hand. Ironically, while the source of this suffering for which they call on God to help is political, separation between the church and the state is said to be honored in the Dinka religious songs. “In continuity with the CMS [Church Missionary Society] missionary prohibitions under Condominium rule for the separation of faith and politics among Christians, the songs of the Episcopal Church tend to provide a spiritual and theological vision, leaving specifically political issues to the genre of

music composed within the Liberation Movement.”⁶⁸

But here one must distinguish between the disciplined perspective

from within the Church and the more popular spiritual view of God's comprehensive protection from tragedy national and man-made, economic and political, ultimately related to the war and the perceived injustice behind it. In that context these spiritual lines from an otherwise secular Ngok Dinka song are pertinent. The singer invokes the ancestral spirits of the leading Pajok clan to plead with God on their behalf: The Court is convened between the clouds ...

The Court adjourned,

Our maternal aunt came With the divinities from above And the Flesh,

They sat on the ground of the sons of Biong.

A storm of dust rose in Abyei Cyclones reached the sky: Family of Arob de Biong, nothing can be done Who knows what the Government is pregnant with?

Even if they flatten us with bearded guns Whom can we wish for?⁶⁹

This broad-based religious orientation of tradition provided the ground for the evolution toward dependency on the Church. The tendency, which has been evolving for decades, to turn to the Christian Church as a potential source of redemption in the pressing circumstances of today's upheavals, has been articulated poignantly by observers since the dawn of independence. According to the Sandersons: The abrupt termination of British administration in the South created an ideological and political vacuum which ... appeared likely to be filled in the short run by futile bloodshed and in the longer run by more or less forcible assimilation to the North. . . .

The Missions offered, and the Churches embodied, doctrines and values which enabled southerners effectively to challenge the Northern Sudanese claim to total superiority. Together with the skills that education had conferred, they also enabled the southern response to transcend the sterile and obsolete objectives and the unco-ordinated 'tribal' basis of traditional Southern resistance. . . . Government policy, by

developing in some districts along specifically Islamic lines as an administrative jihad (and for some months

in 1965-6 as a frankly military jihad), doubtless helped to forge the links between Christian commitment and armed resistance. . . . Even in the Anglican Church, ideological resistance was evidently much stronger than its official policy of 'loyalty,' 'cooperation' and 'prayerful long-suffering' might seem to imply."⁷⁰

Marc Nikkel has also written insightfully about the contradictions of this destructive and yet potentially creative and regenerative process of alignment between tradition and Christian Western modernity: A people struggling with great loss, with displacement, with the rapid erosion of ancient traditions, and of the structures of their society cry out to their Creator. In the community of the Church and in its affirmations the pragmatic Dinka may today find some resources to endure and rebuild part of what is being lost. . . .

Remarkably the Church in this setting has served as something of a preserver of traditional values even as it offered new opportunities. . . . Now, however, it is not the young and supple who choose to migrate and adapt to new values, but it is also the mature, the aged, the deeply rooted, who are forced to question long held assumptions as sections of traditional life are irreparably altered.⁷¹

In the spirit of Christian idealism, forgiveness is advocated to the degree of extending hands to "the enemy." "While new converts may be reluctant to release long-held hostilities, Church leaders are emphatic that generosity of spirit must extend to positive co-existence with Muslims in a non-sectarian environment where 'we abide together equally in unity as brothers.'"⁷²

Marc Nikkel's analysis of these religious changes among the Dinka reflects primarily a perspective from within the Church leadership prudently emphasizing the spiritual aspect and keeping it separate from politics. The elite circles of the Christian South are promoting the idea that Christianity should be consciously cultivated as a pivotal element in southern identity. Christianity, in combination with such other elements as English and the vernacular languages, is the modern model competing

with the Arab-Islamic model of the North. Like all sensitive issues involved in the conflict, this point of view may not be openly advocated or even expressed by the leadership and in particu

lar the SPLM-SPLA, but it is an essential ingredient in the hidden agendas of the war of visions.

DYNAMICS OF MILITARISM

The Sudan appears to be at a critical juncture between the modern concept of the nation-state and the traditional order. Traditionally, leadership reigns by persuasion and regulates the militancy of the youth warrior age-set through moral authority. In the modern nation-state, state institutions monopolize force of arms to maintain the social and political order. In this transitional phase, government leaders reflect both the use of power by the state and a display of the manhood values of youthful military tradition. Because the state is neither strong enough to have the monopoly of power nor neutral enough to be above the traditional factions in confrontation, it tends to be perceived and in fact presents itself as a competitor on the same level as the rival warriors of tradition.

The origin of the problem is one of confusing leadership with force, and it first emerged in the Sudan when General Abboud took power in 1958. In a flood of tribal songs, Abboud was exalted for his “manhood,” and power was said to belong now to those with the force of arms. Those without strength were advised to step aside and abandon claims to leadership. As a song about the Abboud regime put it: Ours has become a country held by the force of the arm Our Great leader, Abboud, hold our country.

This perception, which emanated from the center, began to have a ripple effect that was reflected on the tribes. A song in praise of a paramount chief of a Dinka tribe alludes to the use of force in intertribal relations, using the warrior age-sets in the place of the traditional mediation by tribal leaders.

This is a country we will dispute with the force of the arm, Those without the force will watch with their eyes.

Our age-set has attacked and killed the Arabs.

By the same token, the young people, particularly in the South, who were educated as a step toward assuming the modern leadership of their

educated as a step toward assuming the modern leadership of their people, found themselves out in the cold, neither belonging to

the traditional warrior age-sets nor part of the power of manhood in Khartoum. Their education promised them a leadership role in the context, but, denied that modern role, many fell into the traditional function of warriors through the rebel movement. The war songs sung in the South during the first seventeen years of hostilities are very revealing. They assert the link between the traditional warrior role and the role the rebels are now called on to play in the southern struggle against the injustices inflicted on them by the Arabs. These injustices are described as "the evils of the past," a phrase that alludes to the memory of slavery. And because the Dinka believe that God hates slavery they beseech and expect Him to bless them in their just struggle.

The feud, the feud

The feud of the Southerners with the Northerners

Our feud will never end ...

We shall avenge the evils of the past,

And if we succeed in our vengeance

We shall be praised by God ...

Bless us [O God]

We are the Dinka of Bahr al-Ghazal

O feud, O feud.

In more recent times, with the increasing disintegration of the southern age-set system accompanying the breakdown of the traditional society and the urbanization of the rural community, traditional young people have had to choose between rebellion and migration for urban labor. The traditional sense of masculine fulfillment contrasts with the indignities men would suffer as urban workers, tending to foster rebellion. The educated young people, predisposed toward a leadership they do not

receive, see their educated class as a modern warrior age-set with a modern purpose. This contrasts with, but is comparable to, the traditional functions of youth and is also reinforced by a tradition that recognized and encouraged self-assertiveness. In considering these factors, educated young people have tended to choose rebellion. The overwhelming majority of the SPLA soldiers are recruited from this class.

Quite apart from these developments, the politics of militarism have recently been compounded by the establishment of tribal militias. M. A. Muhammad Salih, speaking to an international forum in 1989,

explained the use of tribal militias through the analysis of two concepts: retribalization and “departicipation” or the shrinking of the political arena.⁷³ For evidence of retribalization, Salih cites the politics of regionalism during the Addis Ababa Agreement, the anti-Dinka movement for the redivision of the region led by the Equatorians, and the increasing internal fragmentation within the South and the North. As he saw it, the political behavior of the Sudanese parties after the May regime showed that the parties were not only dependent on the perpetuation of tribalism, but had deepened its values. They had gone beyond using ethnicity toward short-term political objectives and were using tribal militias to fight a civil war on behalf of the state. In the face of a weak state, which survived rather than developing, the people had begun to discard any notions of political modernization and to preoccupy themselves with local politics. The result was more retribalization and a negation of such concepts as modern nation and state, concepts that were far removed from the tribalist perception. “Retribalization therefore has taken two passages: (a) the militarization of the warrior tradition and (b) the use of tribal entities by political and educated elites in the South and the North as a main source of power. This has in effect led to the shrinking of the modern political arena.”⁷⁴

The notion of the shrinking political arena, or “departicipation,” is borrowed from Nelson Kasfir, who defines it as “the reduction or elimination of political involvement as a consequence of choice, apathy and coercion.”⁷⁵ Salih argues, however, that in the case of the Sudan, the term retribalization is more appropriate than departicipation. He sees modern political institutions shrinking in the face of the advancing tribal values, a process that is augmented by the lack of political tolerance between the warring parties, perpetuating tribal sentiments to strengthen their political positions. In his view, departicipation is therefore not a matter of choice, coercion, or apathy as Kasfir has pointed out, but a conscious participation of the populace in the civil war that is instigated by the elites.⁷⁶

Another way of looking at the situation is to argue that if the state fails to incorporate various ethnic groups into the modern nation-state, they fall

back into their traditional identities with their tribal value structures and practices. Efforts to modernize in turn begin to use those structures as the most economical and functional building blocks.

In this respect, the revival and use of the warrior tradition for mili-

tary purposes has been conspicuous and destructive. As Salih points out, the militarization of the tribal groups is effected in full knowledge of their motivation to raid, loot, and steal animals from the victim tribes that had been part of traditional warfare. "It seems that the state has taken the whole country back to ages before the advent of colonialism and fuelled intertribal warfare by adding an extra dimension of providing modern weapons. An act which makes the colonialists appear like angels in holding the country together and bringing the warring tribal groups under law and order."⁷⁷

The problem is compounded by the mutuality of the predisposition to engage in military action, since these policies find a fertile ground in the traditions of both the southern and the northern tribes. The Nilotic military culture has already been explained. Almost similar are the warrior values of the Humr, an Arabic-speaking Muslim group that was a traditional rival of the Dinka.⁷⁸ Ian Cunnison has written:

From the time of boys' circumcision, when girls cluster round at the operation singing 'if you cry I won't sing for you,' through their teens when girls give boys presents of finely burnished spears with the challenge to kill an elephant or a giraffe, through courting and early marriage when girls and their mothers demand expensive presents and wedding gifts, to seniority when at weddings old women sing of the physical powers of men of their own generations, the Humrawi male is under constant impetus to prove himself in terms of the values that Humr women hold good. These are so close to the values that men hold good that the songs are listened to as avidly by the men as they are by the women who make them up.⁷⁹

Cunnison explains that becoming a warrior is a routine feature of later youth and early manhood, not a specialized occupation, since it is one that every male follows during the defined period of life when he is an active herder. During this period of warriorhood, such attributes of the male role as valor and aggressive virility are emphasized, and others, such as verbal skills, wisdom, and gentleness, are subdued because they are regarded as more appropriate for elders.⁸⁰

As Salih explains, these traditional warrior values can easily be shifted and transferred to modern military combat, though with considerable modification in form, content, and structure. Many tribes in the South and in the North have spontaneously formed armed groups

to protect themselves. Both the state and the SPLM-SPLA have also found in these traditional military values a ready institutional framework for recruitment and morale-raising among their fighting men. "The resuscitation of the warrior tradition means that the tribe has gained one of its lost values of internal cohesion which was traditionally sustained by directing hostilities to aliens and strangers. The end result of this is retribalization rather than the modernization of the political process."⁸¹

While the word retribalization may tend to connote a defined objective and strategy what is involved here is a more pragmatic and opportunistic way of exploiting conflictual tradition, or, to put it more positively it is the use of traditional resources, cultural and human, to supplement modern techniques. The following extracts from the SPLA war songs are examples of the choices southern young people have made. These choices are not so much a process of conscious retribalization as they are a use of a tribal process to invigorate an alternative vision for the nation. This vision asserts southern identity as an essential ingredient in the new Sudan. In that sense the consciousness of the immediate identity that is asserting itself could be seen as tribal. The first song is by women recruits and deals with the overall theme of the liberation struggle as an assertion of identity, defined in the song as "proving existence" and affirming the "pride and dignity" of "the nation."

O, the liberation struggle for my country
When I rose and hoisted my
weapon high
To shoot and chase away the one who has transgressed on
me
And has betrayed the pride and dignity of my nation!

Man, rise and shoot to kill the coward who has betrayed the cause of
your life
And the virtues of your nation
Prove to him your existence ...

Rise, sister and shoot the coward
Prove to him your existence.

O, Land of our Forefathers

We have dedicated to you our blood and our last breath
Let it be
liberation or death
Let the struggle continue until victory is won
Martyr
after martyr

after many:

The struggle will continue until victory is won.

The next song portrays the flag and its symbolic meaning.

We will hoist you, our flag, with united hands ...

With your black color, you will be a symbol to Africans
In your white color will be our symbol of peace;
And to you, O our nation, there is the color red
In lasting memory to our innocent martyrs;
In the milky grey is our Nile, our source of life:
O my country, darkness is passing
And dawn is returning.

I will walk hoisting my head high
In the land of plenty and the stars.

The flag stands for identification with Africa, aspiration for peace, a commitment to armed struggle for justice, and an appreciation for the natural resources, symbolized by the Nile.

And of course, there is exaltation for the leader of the armed struggle.

John Garang, we have raised you

Hold the country together, you are the leader
Sudan is our land, our land, our land.

Implicit in the endorsement of the armed struggle under the SPLM-SPLA is a rejection of all the previous arrangements between the North and the South, which southern revolutionaries perceive represented either a sellout by their leadership or a deceitful short-changing of the South by the North: Regionalism we do not want any more
Small government, we do not want any more
What about the Sudan, to whom shall we leave it?

We shall seize it,

Even if it kills, it's our land.

Above all, the southern militants see themselves as the rightful heirs to the whole of Bilad al-Sudan: Nimeiri, return to your land.

The country is claimed by its owner
It is a war of national liberation

The country is claimed by its owner it is a war of national liberation.

It is Omdurman which we shall contest Even if it is difficult We will not succumb ...

It is Khartoum which we shall contest Even if it is difficult We will not succumb ...

It is Sudan which we will contest Even if it is difficult We will not succumb ...

O people, the land is our land.

Perhaps for the first time southerners began to admit the obvious, that they had contributed to the racial composition of the North and that the two sets of people were therefore not as alien to one another as bitter history had impressed on their consciousness.

RECENT DIVISIONS WITHIN THE SOUTH

A current point of view is that the recent split within the SPLM-SPLA has drastically altered the equations of the conflict, that there have been more deaths in the South as a result of the internal conflict than there have been in the North-South war, and that there is no longer a single, unified South to deal with the North. This argument simply confuses the issue. Of course, there are internal conflicts; they may even be more costly in terms of lives lost than the North-South conflict, and the southern struggle, including the negotiation position, is undoubtedly complicated and weakened by this development. These arguments, however, overlook the main point, which is the relationship between North and South. Individual ambitions and vested interests have a role within this framework. The North, of course, is well served by encouraging and in fact supporting, both politically and financially the divisions within the South to weaken the southern liberation struggle. To allow these divisions to invalidate the southern struggle to achieve its goals would be similar to arguing that the black-on-black violence in South Africa invalidated the black struggle against apartheid. To question the demands of the South for an appropriate constitutional framework or even the right of self-determination on the grounds that they will only internalize their violence against one another is to undermine the very struggle for which they are fighting.

internalize their violence against one an

other would be like denying majority rule to the blacks in South Africa on the ground that it would accentuate violent internal struggle for power among the blacks. It also overlooks the fact that internal rivalry even violence, is a feature of virtually all countries in Africa and elsewhere and must not overshadow the primary considerations. Left alone without the complicating factor of the North, there is no reason to believe that the internal problems of the South would be fundamentally different from the problems faced by many other African or Arab countries that are nonetheless recognized as entities. A closer look at the conflict within the SPLM-SPLA may help elucidate the issues involved and clarify how they do not invalidate the principal case of the South.

Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of the conflict, about which there is hardly any controversy is the objectives of the movement. The objective of the mainstream SPLM-SPLA is said to be the liberation of the whole country from any prejudices based on race, religion, culture, language, or gender. The declared objective of the Akol-Machar-Kong rebellion is the separation of the South, the democratization of the SPLM-SPLA, and respect for human rights in the movement. A closer look reveals a more complex situation, dictated by personal grievances and rivalries that had been brewing over a period of time.

Lam Akol, a Shilluk, the recognized and self-proclaimed initiator of the rebellion within southern ranks, was an academic and an engineer who had played a prominent political role inside the country as a member of the university-based Sudan African Congress (SAC). Articulate in both English and Arabic, Lam became the spokesman for the SAC. On joining the SPLM-SPLA, his record favored him for an immediate promotion to commander after a crash course in military training, a decision for which Garang was discreetly blamed in the movement as elitist. Riek Machar, a Nuer and also a former academic and engineer, received the same promotion when he joined the movement. Gordon Kong, a Nuer and a former commander of Anya-Nya II, which had called for separation, had ironically cooperated with the government against the SPLM-SPLA as friendly forces, but had eventually reconciled with the movement and joined its ranks. Unlike his two colleagues, he is a man of modest, if any,

education, but, as a good fighter, he was allowed to retain his command of the Anya-Nya II forces, which came with him to the SPLM-SPLA.

While Riek Machar succeeded in his new role as a commander and

became popular with his men, Lam Akol apparently experienced operational difficulties and was moved from active command to relief operations, with headquarters in Nairobi. There he is recognized as having performed well and established good connections with a wide circle of international relief agencies. He was often designated as the SPLM-SPLA spokesman at international conferences and the leader of delegations in negotiations with the government, including scholarly or intellectual forums.

Lam Akol was unexpectedly moved from his relief responsibilities and reassigned to a role that left him without specific responsibilities. Personal grievances, which Lam discreetly expressed to selected individuals, began to develop into complaints about Garang's style of leadership and the shortcomings of the movement in general. These were often communicated confidentially within and beyond the movement. They began to focus on such matters as lack of a collective leadership, the concentration of power in one man, and the lack of due process in dealing with political offenders. Although such grievances were widely shared, southerners within and outside the movement felt these concerns should not be allowed to distract from the overriding priority, the intensification of armed struggle for self-liberation. Once liberation was gained, internal differences would then be addressed. But Lam Akol's grievances were intensifying. Lam was with Riek Ma-char and Gordon Kong in Nasir, where he apparently began to cultivate their support in pressing for reforms within the movement. Some of the messages exchanged between Lam Akol and John Garang during this period pointed to a head-on collision.

By the time Commander-in-Chief John Garang called for a meeting of the commanders to be held in Torit in late August 1991, there was every reason for Lam Akol and Riek Machar, who were now almost openly rebellious, to fear that they might face disciplinary action, and perhaps worse, in their confrontation with the commander-in-chief. In response, they agreed to go only if they were permitted to take with them their bodyguards of some 250 men each. News of their demand spread very rapidly and was understood as an obvious rebellion.

By this time a tragic situation had developed. The change of leadership in Ethiopia sent hundreds of thousands of southern refugees fleeing back into the Sudan, where the government forces were bombing them. In addition, the international media were campaigning against alleged violations of human rights by the SPLM-SPLA and in particu

lar the accusation that children in refugee camps were being prepared for recruitment into the rebel forces. The combination of the humanitarian tragedy the campaign in the Western media against the SPLM-SPLA movement, and the mounting grievances against the leadership within certain quarters of the movement itself placed a great deal of pressure on the two commanders and forced them to take the pivotal step of revolt.

There is reason to believe that the commanders received encouragement from some of the local representatives of the international relief agencies and businessmen who not only entertained lingering memories of Garang's alliance with the ousted Ethiopian Marxist Mengistu, but felt that his goal of liberating the whole country was utopian, that the South would be more realistic to call for separation. If the breakaway commanders were to offer an alternative leadership on those principles and also promise democracy and respect for human rights, they could count on international support. This would come not only in the form of more humanitarian assistance, but also as political and developmental support — with a keen eye on the oil reserves of the South. Lam Akol and Riek Machar also hoped that their move would be supported by their fellow commanders and would trigger a massive uprising against the leadership of John Garang from the masses in the South, who could be assumed to prefer separation.

When Riek Machar and Lam Akol declared their open opposition, John Garang was meeting with his other twelve commanders. Also absent was Yusuf Kuwa, the commander of the Nuba forces who were then engaged in military action, but he sent in his support for Garang. As the commanders' expectations were not met, their message was adjusted accordingly and their position presented as “a creeping revolution” based on the lofty ideals of democracy, human rights, and the more achievable objective of separation. Apparently Lam Akol conceded military command to Riek Machar, while he assumed the role of the spokesman for their separatist movement, mostly in foreign capitals. That way, not only did he go back to his familiar political terrain, but he succeeded in reversing the odds that were confronting him in the movement and established for himself a degree of parity with Garang as the virtual leader of the splinter

group in the eyes of the outside world.

Seeing the split in tribal terms, Anya-Nya II, comprising the Nuer, took advantage of the situation and with the cooperation of the

Riek-Lam-Gordon camp, rampaged through Dinkaland with unprecedented brutality, massacring people and looting for cattle. The SPLM-SPLA responded with commensurate ruthlessness. The real tragedy however, is the rift it created and the deep wounds it inflicted on a people whose plight and challenge should have kept them united in their liberation struggle.

Meanwhile, Khartoum, seeking short-term advantage in this rift, opened talks with the splinter group, which eagerly welcomed the gesture. In talks held in Frankfurt, Germany, in January 1992, the splinter group entered into a dialogue with Khartoum's representative, Ali al-Haj, a member of the National Islamic Front (NIF) who had previously dealt with Lam Akol. While Lam at first claimed that the group's position in the Frankfurt talks was aimed at achieving separation for the South, a document he signed with Ali al-Haj endorsed the government's federal framework for a transitional period. The North insisted that this be long enough to give time for experimenting with unity, after which the South ostensibly would be allowed to determine the nature of the relationship by referendum. The separation goal, for which the unity of the movement was broken, was thus compromised in favor of yet another vague northern promise that was clearly intended to foster the northern agenda. Two officers who had been led to believe the separatist rhetoric withdrew from the splinter group when Lam Akol entered into this agreement with Ali al-Haj.

Since then, divisions within the South have continued to proliferate. William Nyuon, deputy commander-in-chief, a Nuer and a man who, though illiterate, commanded great respect and affection within the SPLM-SPLA as a war hero, also defected for reasons that are both genuine and Khartoum-instigated. Several other commanders who had been held in detention in the South for several years, among them another war hero and former Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Karabino Kuanyin Bol, plus Arok Thon and Atem Gualdit escaped and joined the rebellion against Garang. Together with veteran politician Joseph Oduho, they gathered in Kongor toward the end of March, 1993, to plot the overthrow of John Garang. There they were attacked by the mainstream

SPLM-SPLA. Joseph Oduho was killed, but the others escaped to continue their campaign against Garang, which has become both personal and intensely bitter. The government has, of course, reaped the fruits of this conflict within the movement.

It is obvious that whatever advantage the government derives from

this internal crisis can only be short-term. The grievances of the South and the spirit of resistance to northern domination are too deeply rooted and pervasive to be eliminated by internal divisions or to depend on individual leaders. The most that these internal conflicts can do is prolong the war and the human suffering.

The rebellious faction has, however, made some contributions. Not only has it raised the issues of internal organization, broader-based participation in decisionmaking, and greater respect for human rights, but it has also forced examination of the SPLM-SPLA goals of national liberation or the creation of a new Sudan. Southerners generally accept that democracy and human rights have to be pursued within the constraints of the liberation struggle. This is not to compromise the principles involved, but merely to recognize the limitations.

The southern leaders realize, as Lam Akol must have found out, that separation cannot be achieved by asking the controlling authority to grant it as a humanitarian gesture. The mainstream movement believes that it will only be given if the military equations impose it, and it would indeed be wrong to assume that southerners, including the leadership of the SPLM-SPLA, have ruled out separation. At the time that the rebel faction made its move, a number of southerners, intellectuals, politicians, and statesmen were meeting in Ireland to consider the options from which the South must choose. These included the creation of a new, democratic, secular Sudan, a system of federal or confederal coexistence, or outright partition, perhaps with shared services. The outcome of the SPLA commanders' 1991 meeting in Torit also envisaged self-determination for the regions if the stipulated new Sudan proved unacceptable or unachievable. So the South in a sense converged on an agenda that preserved the aspirations for a new Sudan without locking itself into that formula; instead, it reserved the right to pursue alternatives to unity.

In this respect, the leadership of the SPLM-SPLA has always made it clear that those aspiring to separation and those interested in a new Sudan have a common cause in that the national agenda automatically embraced the local one. A liberated Sudan would imply a liberated South.

But even if the objective were separation, fighting for a new democratic and equitable Sudan would win more regional and global support than fighting for secession. Separatism as an objective would therefore benefit from the struggle for equality in unity. Should the ultimate goal of a new Sudan fail, the regional objective of liberating

the South would have been accomplished in a practical way in the process.

It would be wrong, however, to rule out the feasibility of achieving a new Sudan that would liberate the people from Arab-Islamic hegemony for several reasons. One is that the southern-led struggle for equality has expanded to wide areas outside the traditional southern boundaries, namely Southern Kordofan [the Nuba], Southern Blue Nile, Darfur, and the Beja region. Rebellions in these areas have indeed started, whether as part of the SPLM-SPLA or as independent, but nationally collaborative movements. It is not far-fetched to envisage these regional movements joining hands in the future and converging on Khartoum for the liberation of the whole country and a redefinition of the national identity under a constitutional framework that would guarantee full participation, fair distribution, and a new sense of legitimacy.

The leadership of the SPLM-SPLA, which not only includes northerners of prominent experience and stature, but is now coordinating and cooperating with other northern political forces, is far from being utopian or naive in its stated aspirations. Both the creation of a new Sudan and the dismemberment of the nation even within the umbrella of a united struggle for a new united Sudan are plausible objectives. Which of them will eventually prevail will in large measure depend on the statesmanship, or lack of it, of the Sudanese leaders, especially in Khartoum.

With the North divided between the fundamentalist regime and the ousted political parties, the South splintered by internal dissension and the tribalism it has generated, and opposition groups in both the North and the South now organized into the National Democratic Alliance, the conflict has acquired a new and complicated dimension that makes it even more intractable. Despite the symbolic role of the Legitimate Command, comprising the generals who were ousted by the fundamentalist coup, northern opposition groups have no credible military force with which to confront the regime and therefore need the SPLM-SPLA as an ally; without it their opposition is powerless. This means that it would not be in their interest for the SPLM-SPLA to reach a settlement

with Khartoum that addresses only the North-South dimension of the conflict.

On its part, the movement has also characterized the problem as national and not southern. It includes in its composition fighting forces

from certain regions of the North and individuals from across the country. Any settlement of the conflict in terms of North and South has to put this complicating and broadening dimension into consideration. Furthermore, since the SPLM-SPLA finds the alliance with northern opposition groups to be a political advantage in fighting the regime, it is disposed to share the views of the northern parties that the problem is one of Islamic fundamentalism, denial of democracy and gross violation of human rights throughout the country, rather than a North-South conflict. The tendency is to go even further, to see the regime and its fundamentalism as a regional and even international threat. The immediate causes of the conflict are thus overshadowed by the larger framework and by various agendas, making even more remote the prospects for resolving the core issues that provoked the violence in the first place.

The division within the SPLM-SPLA has also stimulated other factional short-term calculations that are distorting perceptions of the conflict and complicating the prospects for a solution. From the perspective of the government in Khartoum, embracing the breakaway factions makes possible partial settlements with fewer compromises as a means of weakening the mainstream movement. Weak and ineffective as the splinter group is, it found itself compelled to cooperate with the very government against which it declared a secessionist war. The splinter group has no other options short of reuniting with the mainstream movement, since it is entirely at the mercy of the government. To turn this grim situation into an asset, the most the faction can expect is a partial settlement that gives federal status to Upper Nile, the area that is nominally under their control but which the government forces could overrun at will. The government may be calculating that with peace established in Upper Nile, the oil reserves in Bentiu could be exploited to rescue the economy which would strengthen the regime not only to prosecute the war in the South, but also to entrench itself in the North. While all this may sound plausible from the tactical and even strategic perspective of the regime, it cannot be a sustainable basis for a just and lasting solution that would support a long-term process of nation building. Indeed, recent developments, including a popularly based, religiously led rebellion by the Nuer against the government, make such prospects

unreliable. The fact that the government has been flirting with the rebel groups and the mainstream movement for parties to negotiate with underscores the precariousness of the divide-and-rule tactics in a conflict based on deep-rooted genuine grievances.

The interplay between the overarching North-South conflict and the second-layer conflicts within the North and the South has thus entangled the problems involved and rendered their solution more challenging. The critical question now is whether it is possible to disentangle the conflicts, prioritize them in magnitude and manageability, and address them in their order of urgency but resolving them all in their multiple forms and levels. Must ending the war in the South wait until issues relating to fundamentalism, democracy and human rights have been resolved? Is full consensus in the North a prerequisite to any settlement with the South? Could a settlement with the South facilitate consensus in the North? Likewise, is southern unity an essential condition for ending the war in the South, or could a meaningful settlement be achieved with a faction? These are some of the questions for which there are no easy answers. The guiding principle should, however, be a genuine search for a just peace, a comprehensive, lasting national unity, and a sustainable process of nation building. This goal cannot be attained through short-term calculations aimed at strengthening one's position or weakening one's adversary.

Clearly the balance of rights and wrongs tips in favor of whichever group is perceived as fighting for the just cause of the South within the framework of the nation. Although the SPLM-SPLA has been weakened by the loss of its Ethiopian support base and by internal feuding, it remains a credible liberation movement despite the recent government campaign and victories. The effect of shifts in military power cannot be fully predicted, but there is every reason to believe that the government cannot win a decisive victory against the movement.

SOUTHERN CHALLENGE FOR THE NATION

The traditional cultural value system and the way it has been reinforced and strengthened by modernizing forces have given the South a competing model of nationhood. This is arguably more sustainable than the model offered by the fundamentalists in the North, precisely because it is more in tune with the secular notion of the modern nation-state in the interdependent global context. Nevertheless, the SPLM-SPLA model suffers from its association with the South, which is regionally limiting,

though it is now gaining ground in black Africa. The northern model has the advantage of the political realities at the

national level, reinforced by the Arab-Islamic world, although by the same token, it tends to alienate black Africa. The national strength of the Arab-Islamic model explains why the governments that have followed Nimeiri were unable to abrogate his unpopular Islamic September Laws, now consolidated by the present regime into a full-fledged shari'a.

Nonetheless, the SPLM-SPLA, which represents an amalgamation of factors from tradition to modernity, poses a challenge to the champions of the Arab-Islamic model.

For the North, the appeal of the South lay in its weakness and underdevelopment, which made it a raw material to be molded, ideally into the Arab-Islamic pattern of the nation rather than the Christian Western patterns of the colonialists. As a northerner has stated, "The exclusion of Islam was only achieved at the cost of considerable underdevelopment and thus the Southerners were not in a position to play the influential role played by Christians in such predominantly Muslim politics as Nigeria, Senegal, and Lebanon. The paradoxical result is that the stronger the South grows, the more the Muslim Northerners feel challenged, and the stronger becomes their attachment to their religious identity."⁸²

As the South improves itself with education and develops a modern identity reinforced by Christianity, Western culture, and military strength, the emerging parity between the competing models makes the South too strong to disregard or to manipulate. But the more seriously the South's grievances are considered, the clearer it becomes that they cannot be redressed within the Arab-Islamic status quo. As a result, the South begins to pose a real threat to the system: either the national framework is fundamentally restructured, the South decisively defeated and dominated, or the country risks disintegration. The Sudan remains poised between these difficult choices. And with the realization that the needed compromises are difficult to make, the regime in Khartoum becomes even more inclined toward adopting a hard line, hoping to break the back of the SPLM-SPLA and make those groups more amenable to accepting far less than they are currently demanding.

But even with the national situation working in favor of the Arab-Islamic model, the government cannot stabilize the nation without the cooperation of the SPLM-SPLA, and this movement cannot be expected to endorse the northern vision for the nation. The prospects that such polarized positions will be bridged may well depend on the

development of a third centrist force. Such a force seems to be in the making in the current cooperation of the SPLM-SPLA with northern opposition groups. While much of this cooperation may be purely tactical, it could conceivably prove to be midwife for other alternative arrangements, since the identity picture of the Sudan is a murky one. By virtue of its ambiguities, it offers potential in varied directions. Which way the future will go remains the challenging question for building or dismantling the emerging nation.

While the power at the center has been the focal point of North-South conflict, it is important to bear in mind the comprehensive picture of both horizontal and vertical intercommunal relations within the national context. Horizontally communities interrelate in a pragmatic manner that is ethnically culturally and religiously tolerant of differences. Vertically the various levels of the power hierarchy — local, provincial, regional, and national — influence each other both positively and negatively. Ngok Dinka-Humr Arab relations in Southern Kordo-fan are illuminating on both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of the national identity crisis in the Sudan.

PART 4 North-South Microcosm

Chapter 7 The Ngok Dinka

The Ngok Dinka inhabit a border region between northern and southern Sudan. Its headquarters are at Abyei, by which the area is also known. Since the precolonial period, the Ngok Dinka have interacted closely with their Arab neighbors to the North, the cattle-herding Humr Baggara, also known as the Missiriya. The Ngok area can properly be described as a microcosm of the Sudan. It is administered as part of Southern Kordofan, in northern Sudan, and borders Bahr al-Ghazal and Upper Nile provinces in the South. Most of the Dinka are under the jurisdiction of these southern provinces. The Ngok area draws from both sides for its character; it suffers from the tensions and conflicts of their confrontation, yet it bridges them and sometimes mediates between them. The Ngok thus pose a problem in the North-South conflict. At first the Ngok affiliated with Kordofan to seek protection from Arab tribes that continually raided their territory in search of slaves. That strategy eventually culminated in their formal incorporation in the administration of Kordofan.

Since the rise of southern nationalism, however, the Ngok have continuously suffered from the tension of North-South confrontation. Their increasing aspiration to be part of the South has been espoused by the educated young people. Their paramount chief at first sought advantage in identifying with the North. With the passage of time and as the North-South conflict intensified, the aspiration to be part of the South became a collective yearning that was blocked by the government.

Young people, especially the educated, took part in the seventeen-year war, and the area was as devastated by the war as was the South. The Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the conflict by granting the South regional autonomy, left the Abyei problem unresolved. This created a situation comparable to what had prevailed in the South; the Ngok political movement to join the South was perceived by the North as separatist and was repressed. As the Ngok movement continued to

grow in strength, the repression intensified. The vicious cycle escalated into widespread incidents of violence that eventually linked with, and contributed to, the resumption of North-South hostilities and the outbreak of the current phase of the war.

Men and women from Abyei are now fully involved in the SPLM-SPLA, and some of them occupy senior positions in the leadership of the movement. Southerners generally, and the leadership of the SPLM-SPLA particularly, believe that there should be no question next time about Abyei's being part of the South and that no other agreement with the North will be possible that does not formally incorporate Abyei into the South. But there is no doubt that the North would contest that claim, and the problem of Abyei will almost certainly be one of the issues that the resolution of the North-South conflict will have to address. Unless the issue of Abyei is resolved, it will always be a source of conflict between the North and the South.

This chapter and the next present the main elements of the problem in a historical perspective, beginning with the initial contacts between the Ngok and Arab tribes to the North; the effect of the various governments, from the Turko-Egyptian administration through the Mahdist revolution and the Anglo-Egyptian administration, to the successive regimes of the independence period; and the current crisis in North-South relations as manifested in the war that has raged since 1983.

THE NGOK-HOMR CONTEXT

Despite centuries of contact with Arab tribes and the adoption, adaptation, and assimilation of certain northern cultural traits, the Ngok have remained distinctly Dinka and in some respects more so than their brethren farther South. Placed at the point of contact with the outside world and confronting a civilization that claimed universality, their instinct for cultural self-preservation has led them to resist the threats of inequitable assimilation. Paul Howell, the British anthropologist-administrator, in a work published in 1951, noted, "To the casual observer ... the Ngork [sic] Dinka may appear deeply affected by Arab influences. Closer observations show that the so-called process of

'Arabization' is only skin deep 99 per cent of the Ngork, despite generations of contact with the Arab, are quite unaffected by any form

of Islamic traits and are as completely Dinka as their Dinka neighbours to the South.”¹

While the Ngok see themselves as unequivocally part of the mainstream Dinka in the South and their genealogies have southern origins, there are nevertheless several contrasting factors. First, during the traditional (precolonial) and to a degree the transitional (colonial) period, when the North and South were isolated from one another, the Ngok Dinka and their northern counterparts had closer contacts. Second, although hostilities characterized contacts in both contexts, especially during the traditional phase, diplomatic ties between Ngok and Arab leaders contributed to an improvement in relations between the two groups. Third, while the earlier equations of power during this phase placed the North at a clear advantage over the South, there was relative parity in the traditional military and economic strength of the Ngok and the Arabs. Fourth, with the beginning of the transitional phase starting with the Turko-Egyptian administration, disparities in the power situation began to emerge as military technology entered the scene with the intervention of external actors. Fifth, while the attitudes of the colonial rulers toward the North and the South placed the Arab North disproportionately above the South, the British treated the ruling elites of the Ngok Dinka and the Arabs with relative equality. Sixth, for perhaps the same reason, while the modern leadership of the North and the South at the point of contact before and after independence represented different generations, with the age level in the North being considerably higher, in the Ngok-Humr context there was generational equilibrium in the respective leaderships, until the educated youth assumed political leadership in the modern era.

As a consequence of all these factors, the level of mutual recognition, respect, and cooperation has been higher in Ngok-Humr relations than in North-South relations in general. This in turn has facilitated interracial contact and cross-cultural exchange on both sides. Some Arabs have learned the Dinka language and adopted Dinka ways, most of the Ngok have adopted Arab dress; many speak Arabic, and a good number have converted to Islam; yet both sides have essentially remained separate and proud of their respective identities, Dinka or Arab.

British colonial rule ambivalently kept the Ngok administratively as part of the North while fostering modernization consistent with the emerging southern identity. The educational system among the Ngok

was at first the same as the southern system, with classes taught in the vernacular at the elementary level; students who completed the elementary level were encouraged to attend southern schools, either government or missionary where English took over as the medium of instruction. Although Abyei elementary school was a government school, the area itself fell within the Catholic sphere of influence, so Catholicism was taught there, and the pupils automatically converted to that faith. Not until the 1950s, when the educational system among the Ngok was reoriented northward, did Arabic take over as the medium of instruction. At the same time, students went to northern schools to pursue a higher education. This system introduced a strong bias in favor of conversion to Islam and discouraged Christianity.

Even in this respect, the British policy among the Ngok was not fully consistent, combining elements of unity and separatism. As local nationalism developed under people who had received their education in the South, the situation became more asymmetrical. This was manifested by greater discrepancies in the age levels of the respective leaders, wider gaps in communication, less recognition and respect for the new leaders by the local Arabs and government authorities, and, through the new Ngok Dinka elite, an increasing identification of local nationalism with the South.

Many of the differences between the North-South and Ngok-Humr situations are largely a function of degree rather than of kind. While the Ngok had forged their own diplomatic ties with the Arabs before condominium rule, the British colonial administration became the pivotal factor ensuring mutual security and peaceful coexistence. When the Arabs assumed control at independence, the link between the levels of the power hierarchy, local, provincial, and national, began to be tilted in favor of the Arab-Islamic identity, to the disadvantage of both the South and the Ngok Dinka. The sectarian political links between the local Arab leadership and the dominant Mahdist power structure in the country were reinforced by the marriage of the paramount chief of the Missiriya Arabs, Babo Nimir, into the Mahdi family.² That close link to the center through the intermediate levels of the district and the provincial authorities began

to undermine the local security arrangements and mutual cooperation that had characterized the relationships of the two communities at the North-South meeting point. The mutual influence between the two contexts, the North-South and the Ngok-Humr, increased with the intensification of civil strife, peak-

ing toward the end of the seventeen-year war and in the current civil war.

The accounts of the interaction and interrelationships between the Ngok Dinka and their neighbors to the North and the South reveal a richness of interpersonal and intercommunal relations, both cooperative and competitive, peaceful and violent. This is in marked contrast to the undifferentiated conglomeration of North-South conflict, which is both real and oversimplified. The wider national context between North and South reflects the racial, cultural, and religious confrontation and conflict, inspired and led by people with abstract notions of nationalism and nation building. The Ngok-Arab context reveals the pragmatic difficulties for groups who must, in addition to fighting for principles, struggle to find workable formulas for coexisting economically and interacting amicably. In a sense, then, the two contexts reflect complementary dimensions: the equations of sharing or competing for central power and the importance of decentralizing authority and control to enable local communities to deal with the real problems of life as they see them.

Regulating the interaction between these levels, the local and the national, to mutual advantage, has been the pervasive theme of Ngok-Arab relations and perhaps the most formidable legacy of the Ngok experience. Within their own local context, the Arabs and the Dinka appear to have sought and found ways of coexisting. But in the wider context of Arab-African, Muslim-Animist, and later Muslim-Christian dichotomies, the Arabs have consistently sought reinforcement of their racial, cultural, and religious advantage over the Dinka from their Arab kin and fellow Muslims. The Dinka, for their part, have sought justice from whoever has had authority and control among their neighbors or at the central government level in the national capital. Naturally, in their endeavors for justice, they fared best with the British as the third party, with minimum bias in judging between the Dinka and the Arabs; they have fared worst with Arab-dominated national governments, in particular those under the Mahdist Umma party, for whom the Baggara have provided a reliable and consistent base of support.

The Ngok Dinka were fully involved in the 1955-72 war on behalf of the

South, and they are equally involved in the current conflict. A number of prominent Ngok officers died in both phases of the conflict. More than a thousand are said to have died when the clashes with Anya-Nya 11 generated a bloody internal conflict among the warring

factions in the South, and the Nuer intercepted and devastated a contingent of Ngok troops crossing their territory to join the main SPLM-SPLA forces. By all accounts the Ngok are fully identified with the South and are unequivocally southerners, despite the administrative arrangements that place them with the North.

Ngok identification with the North has indeed been grossly exaggerated, precisely because their relatively cooperative coexistence contrasts so strikingly with the extreme hostility between North and South. A close examination of that situation, however, reveals not only the persistence of two separate Arab and Dinka identities, but also a personalized interrelationship through their leaders in a manner more characteristic of cordial diplomatic ties than of a full fusion of their societies in terms of physical settlement, cultural affinity and intermarriage.

Diplomatic relations between the Ngok and the Humr began with Arob Biong, the great grandfather of the present Ngok paramount chief, and Biong's Arab counterpart, a man called Azoza, whose descendants have been the Arab leaders. The relationship was sustained and advanced by the Dinka chief Kwol Arob, the son and successor of Arob Biong, and his Arab counterparts, Ali Julla and his son and successor, Nimir, who assumed the leadership of the Humr. Deng Majok, who succeeded his father, Kwol Arob, and Babo Nimir, who succeeded his father, Nimir, advanced the relationship even further.

At first the relationship between these two sets of leaders was based on the Ngok leader's quest for security against Arab slave raiders and the Arab need for secure grazing rights during the dry season. This created a foundation of mutual interest on which their friendship was established. Although there was relative parity between the power of the two tribes initially during the nineteenth-century upheavals Arab slave raiders were better armed than the Dinka and therefore had the upper hand. Besides, as Muslims who, despite their visible African features, regarded themselves as Arabs and a superior race, the Humr looked down on the Dinka as kufar, heathens, and abeed, slaves. Of course, the Dinka also looked down on the Humr, but the Arabs, identified with the slave raiders,

had the material means to impose their might through armed aggression and devastation of the Dinka. The fact that Ngok leaders were able to win an appreciable degree of recognition and respect from their Arab counterparts was therefore considered a significant accomplishment for heathen non-Arab leaders.

Over the successive generations, and with the intervention of British administrators as neutral moderators, the level of equality between the respective leaders rose, but the disparity between the Arabs and the Dinka never diminished, nor did Arab condescension toward the Dinka as heathens and slaves. In addition, the more the Dinka leaders rose in status and asserted a degree of equality with their Arab counterparts, the more they competed with the Arabs for leadership in their shared jurisdiction. The Arab leaders found this to be intolerable, a reaction that the Dinka leaders also found unacceptable. The late paramount chiefs of the Ngok and Humr, Deng Majok and Babo Nimir, epitomized these ambivalences. They grew up watching their fathers cooperate as the leaders of their respective tribes, establishing close friendly relations, which involved exchanging gifts of horses and cattle as symbols of family solidarity. They themselves became friends at an early age, a relationship they used to support their rise to the pinnacle of power in their respective tribes. But with time, and especially after independence, their friendship suffered from tensions and rivalries that arose locally and nationally. Both of their tribes found themselves competing within the newly formed administrative area, and the Arab leaders were often, though not always, favored by the Arab government in Khartoum. This resulted in political conflicts and personal animosity which, though largely concealed by outward courtesies and diplomatic niceties, became increasingly obvious to respective peoples. These tensions added fuel to the violent hostilities that began to erupt both between their tribes and in North-South relations. In due course, the two situations became intertwined and synonymous.

Even when the Arab and Dinka leaders were on the best of terms as friends and allies, and although this state of affairs had a positive effect on the relations between their respective peoples, the traditional gulf between the Dinka and the Arab tribes remained unbridged. An incident concerning Babo's younger brother, Ali Nimir, himself a chief, characterizes the ambivalences in racial prejudices. Ali Nimir was passing near a crowd of Ngok Dinka sitting in the shade of a tree in the Arab town of Muglad. It was rumored that Chief Deng Majok had arrived

in town the night before, and Ali wanted to be sure if that were true. So he asked the assembled Dinka, “Abeed (slaves), has your chief truly arrived?”

Much of the story between the Ngok and the Humr is in reality a story of the personal ties between their respective leaders. It is also

an ambivalent story of success and failure in overcoming the identity cleavages that divide the leaders and their peoples. Although several generations of leaders have played their part in this process, the personalities of Deng Majok and Babo Nimir have been pivotal in the unfolding of the story of Ngok-Humr relations. But the relationship between the leaders of these tribes, including even the latest, Deng and Babo, was established at a time when the Ngok Dinka and Humr Arab communities lived in relative isolation with episodic contacts that could be managed and mediated by their leaders. Moreover, the relationship was facilitated by the impartial role of the British administrators. When those administrators withdrew at independence, the Ngok-Humr situation at the North-South borders gradually deteriorated to the point where it is only marginally distinguishable from the situation prevailing in the South. This inevitably raises the question of how significant were the original personal relationships and their influence on tribal relations. Since the two communities remain largely intact and separate, not significantly bonded by intermarriage, which the mainstream of both groups still considered undesirable and unacceptable, and since their sentiments of mutual racial disdain and prejudice largely persisted, to what extent did the close ties between Deng Majok and Babo Nimir affect the sense of political identity between their peoples?

The answer is probably that these initially cordial relations had a positive influence, but that the subsequent deterioration in their relations also had a negative effect. More significantly, both effects were probably superficial or marginal to the deep-rooted sense of divisive identities and the mutual scorn and mistrust that they sustained over generations and which the friendship between the leaders moderated only superficially and temporarily. The effect was temporary not only because of the increasing deterioration in the relationship between the leaders, but also because the division between their groups was profoundly connected with the identity cleavage between the North and the South. It would therefore have been difficult if not impossible for the Ngok and the Humr to sustain cordial relations as an island of peace, security, and stability in a sea of North-South turbulence and violence.

The experience of Ngok-Humr relations at the North-South border is therefore important because, seen in its entirety, it both illustrates the depth of the North-South division and gives an example of cooper

ation between the two peoples. The challenge then is to scrutinize both contexts to discern the circumstances under which such coexistence and cooperation is possible and the conditions under which the mutual animosities and bitter historical memories, only hidden beneath a thin veneer of cordiality, can break out into indiscriminate communal violence. The mere fact of one's identity thus provides a license for torture, killing, and the return to the dehumanizing historical element of the relationship — slavery.

LEADERSHIP

The period before the British colonial rule is for the Dinka a vast uncharted history stretching back through a long oral tradition into mythology. Almost all of this period is characterized by hostile interaction with the outside world. This has had a tendency to reinforce the desire for physical, psychological, and conceptual isolation. During this period, the world appears to have been dichotomized between the Dinka, who are human, and the strangers, who for their mysterious powers were seen as evil spirits, demons, or animals, usually human lions. Oral history, which embodies mythology is generally associated with the legends of leadership. The Ngok Dinka, living at the frontiers of contacts with the hostile world to the North, have been particularly dependent on the role of their divine leadership, which they trace back for more than ten generations and which links up with more mythical prototypes of original leadership, allegedly from the Byre of Creation.

Ngok Dinka society, like other Nilotic societies, is organized on the basis of territory, clan or lineage, and operational age-setting. There are nine subtribal groups in Ngok society, known as wot (singular wut), literally cattle-camps, or now by the Arabic word omudiya, each of which is headed by a subtribal chief, beny, known as omda in Arabic. Each subtribe is subdivided into two or three sections, also headed by sectional chiefs known as sheikh in Arabic. As individuals move and settle wherever they choose, over time clans or lineages cut across these territorial entities. But within the section, the lineage is recognized as a political entity headed by a nomgol, clan head. Age-sets are organized on subtribal bases as warrior regiments. Tribal wars were fought between

subtribes, using spears. Within sections, fights were considered internal, and only clubs were permitted as weapons of war.

In the major wars, the various subtribes would align themselves into two main alliances headed by the two leading lineages among the Ngok.

Ngok leadership is associated with two clans or lineages, Dhiendior and Pajok, which are found in most of the subtribes but are associated principally with Abyor and Mannyuar. Both boast long lineages. To this day, although these two clans have intermarried at almost all genealogical levels to foster cooperation, they remain intensely competitive. The Dinka generally believe that the Dhiendior are the most spiritually powerful, being the descendants of the legendary Longar, recognized by all the Dinka tribes as their spiritual hero. Somewhere in the process, Jok, whom the mythology associates with the original Dhiendior lineage, is said to have branched out and founded his own line. Among the Ngok Dinka, the descendants of Jok progressively assumed the leading role until colonial intervention gave them the predominant leadership, with Dhiendior occupying the second position. This has had the effect that the myths of original leadership tend to be reinterpreted to justify and reinforce the contemporary preeminence of Jok's clan, the Pajok. But the competition with the corresponding Dhiendior clan remains intense, although the role of the Dhiendior has been relegated largely to that of an opposition group.

According to the now dominant myths of the Pajok lineage, Jok, the founding father of Pajok, is believed to have emerged from the Byre of Creation with the two Sacred Spears that have been passed down from generation to generation as symbolic sources of spiritual powers. Even the Pajok concede that Longar, of the Dhiendior clan, presented as an older brother of Jok, was initially in the lead, but he proved ineffective, and Jok then assumed the supreme leadership. It is said that they came to a river in which lurked powers that would kill the people as they tried to cross. These powers are sometimes described as spirits and sometimes as white people. Jok eventually gave them his daughter, Achai, which made the powers withdraw and the waters part, allowing the people to cross on dry land.

Jok's descendants have retained leadership through the observance of

primogeniture, by which the most senior son of the most senior wife succeeds, even though circumstances may be complicated enough to permit a latitude of choice among the sons of the chief. In their descending order, the lineage includes: Bulabek, Dongbek, Kwoldit, Monydhang, Allor, Biong, Arob, Kwol, Deng Majok, and, in rapid succession, after their father's death, Monyyak (Abdalla), Kwol (Adam),

and Kwol (Adol).³ Ngok history is largely traced through these leaders.

The competing genealogy of Dhiendior comprises Longar, the founder, Jiel, Juic, Akonon, Bagat, Mithiang, Ajuong, Ajing, Alor, Jipur, Chol, and several more from collateral branches changing leadership positions in internal rivalry. Competition for leadership between these two sets of leaders has persisted through these two lineages. Much of the disunity among the Ngok, which has often been a factor in their relations with the Arabs, relates directly to the rivalry between these two clans, with lesser groups aligning themselves behind them. Much of what is said in the following chapters relates to the Pajok as the principal leaders and players, but some significant elements of the Dhiendior are involved in virtually every counteraction against them. The picture is not, however, one of consistent opposition, for these two lineages must also cooperate to offer the tribe effective leadership. The reality, then, is a complex picture reflecting both rivalry and cooperation between elements on both sides.

Part of the conflict now raging between the Ngok Dinka and the Humr Arabs relates to their patterns of migration, from which the ownership of land grazing rights is determined. These patterns are closely correlated to the movements and settlements of the tribes under their genealogically traceable leaders. The history of the tribes under these leaders is therefore of critical importance to the issues of tribal identity and the land rights derived from them.

Historians estimate that the Ngok first came into contact with the Humr Baggara Arabs in about 1745 in the areas the Ngok now occupy.⁴ But Dinka contacts with lighter races reflected in myths go much further back. The people involved could, of course, have been Europeans, Turks, Egyptians, or Arabs from the North who took part in the raiding expeditions for slaves. But, as with southern history, records and memory seem to begin with the nineteenth-century upheavals. Since the Ngok and the Humr were both border people and in close contact, conflicts between them were intense but subject to political settlements, which were effected through diplomacy or were superimposed by the colonial

powers. British authority was within easier reach of Ngok leadership than it was of the leaders of the southern tribes, Dinka and non-Dinka alike. The Ngok claim that their land used to extend as far North as Denga, otherwise known as Muglad, now the administrative center of the Humr.

The Pajok genealogy of Ngok leaders gives little information about

Jok's son, Dongbek, and his grandson, Bulabek, which implies relatively peaceful times. Kwoldit is said to have been the first leader to encounter a people of unknown origin. His leadership coincided with one of the most difficult periods in Dinka history, the nineteenth-century upheavals in which "the world was spoiled" by slave raiders and hostile tribes. It would seem that the Ngok were retreating southward under pressure from the North and that the people they encountered were those who had occupied the land the Ngok now occupy.

Although most of the Ngok settled on the Ngol River northeast of their present territory, one branch, Thorjok Alei, remained in the North in the area now occupied by the Baggara Arabs. According to K. D. D. Henderson, the Baggara first came in contact with Thorjok [Alei] "one generation after Kwoldit had settled the Ngok along the Ngol. Alei was then under the leadership of a man called Deing [Deng] whose headquarters were at Debbat el Mushbak, a prominent mound near Hasabo."⁵ The Dinka believe that Deinga, the present headquarters of the Missiriya Baggara Arabs, derives its name from the name of Alei's leader, Deing [or Deng]. Alei was later forced by increasing Arab pressure to move southward and join the bulk of the Ngok.⁶ And yet, because they had the closest contacts with the Arabs, the other Dinka saw them as a marginal group, assuming that they had mixed with the Arabs racially and culturally. For the same reason, they symbolized the dynamics and the ambivalences inherent in interracial and cross-cultural integration or assimilation on the North-South border.

A recurrent theme in the war songs of the Ngok subtribes who had moved earlier into the Ngok territory was insulting their Alei adversaries as Arabs partly because they were the last to move from the North and partly because many among them have features that are somewhat more Arabic than the rest of the Ngok. The word alei in Dinka means stranger or foreigner. Verses from one war song are illustrative: O Alei, O Alei,

If it were not for Chief Kwol, the Great Pied One, You Arab, I would chase you away to the Ngol [river]

• • • • •

And capture the land.

Alei retaliated in kind: Why am I called an Arab [Let it be], I am an Arab

An Arab who speaks with a strange tongue

With force, I have captured the land.

Not much is said about the next three leaders of the Pajok lineage — Monydhang, Allor, and Biong — beyond the mere mention of their leadership and their place of death and burial.⁷ Biong's period was the beginning of another critical phase in the history of the Ngok Dinka. The wars with the invaders from the north were resumed and intensified under the Turko-Egyptian rule.

THE TURKO-EGYPTIAN RULE

During the Turko-Egyptian era the South was devastated by raids for slaves, not only by government troops but also by private bands. Some of the raids were led by Arab tribal leaders who saw in the trade an opportunity for bounty and power. Biong Allor, by then the principal Ngok chief, personally led the resistance. Arob, Biong's son and successor, also stood firm against these assaults, working to overcome them through diplomatic and administrative contacts with Arab leaders to the North. The first point of conflict as well as resolution was with the Rezeigat Arabs of Madibbo in Darfur. As the forces of Madibbo overran the country, Arob Biong and Allor Ajing of the Dhiendior clan were taken to the South for protection. Through a Ngok intermediary a war hero by the name of Dau Kir, Arob Biong eventually met and negotiated peace with Madibbo.

The story of how Dau Kir saved the country is widespread among the Ngok and is told with considerable consistency. Although the land had been mostly abandoned, Dau Kir and another warrior called Chol Atem remained defiant against the Arabs. They lived in hiding places along the river with their wives and whenever possible attacked the Arabs, inflicted casualties, and outran them back into hiding. One day, while Dau was away searching for food, the Arabs found his hiding place and captured his wife, Achol. When he returned and learned that she had been captured by the Arabs, he decided to go after her right into the Arab camp, determined to die if necessary.

As soon as he appeared at the camp, he was seized by the guards who, on learning that he was the very Dau who had caused so much anxiety to the Arabs, wanted to kill him instantly. But they were or

dered by Madibbo to bring the captive before him. Madibbo questioned Dau very closely to ascertain that he was indeed the man who had inflicted so much harm on the Arabs and to find out why he had decided to come into the camp when he knew he might die. Dau confirmed his identity and explained that he was following his wife, realizing full well that he might be killed. "I decided that it is better for those who had captured my wife to kill me and let me die." Madibbo then ordered that he be allowed to see his wife. Achol was unchained and brought in front of them. They embraced passionately as Achol cried: "O Dau, my dear, what brought you here? Are you to perish like me? Why did you come to die?" Dau responded, "Achol, now that I have seen your eyes, my death is better than your death. They can choose what they like, whether to kill me or gag me."

Impressed by the mans courage, Madibbo inquired about the general state of the country where the people had fled, whether there was a leader for the Ngok and where he could be found. Dau explained the situation to him, including the fact that the chiefs, Arob Biong and Allor Ajing, had been taken to another tribe for security. Madibbo offered to make him a chief and to cooperate with him in reestablishing order. But Dau argued, "Why should I become the chief when there is already a chief in the country? I am only a nobleman. There is a chief to whom the country belongs." So he was sent to go and bring Arob to discuss peace with the Arabs. "There can be no goodness in any land where there is no chief," Madibbo explained. "I will let you go and the same heart with which you came for your wife will make you bring the chief." Meanwhile, his wife was to be kept hostage to guarantee his return, after which the Arab leader promised to set them both free.

So Dau went and informed Chief Arob Biong. When they returned together, Madibbo greeted Arob very warmly and said, "Arob Biong, if you are alive and you are the leader of this country then we shall make peace with you and we shall both stop the boys from fighting." A peace agreement was thus concluded, and Madibbo designated one of his men to go with Chief Arob as his representative among the Dinka. The other chief, Allor Ajing, was also fetched. "That was how the land was held

That was the end of that destruction.”⁸

While Madibbo's desire to restore social order to Dinkaland may be seen as contradictory to the overall conditions of devastation wrought by the slave raids, it also indicates that the Arab leader must have

realized that the long-term mutual interests of the neighboring tribes would be served best through some stable political arrangements with leaders who could cooperate and promote friendly relations. Judging from this old war song of the Abyor, a subtribe of the Ngok, the conflict with the invading forces of Madibbo must have taken its toll on both sides despite the devastation of Dinkaland: The brown horse of the Brown Fur [Arabs]

[He] Says I should abandon my land
Beware of my spear shafts
In my fight with the brown horse,
Have we not both suffered? ...

And has not the horse of the Fur fallen?

What is it that the [Arab] ... wants?

I am a ferocious bull.

And the tribes cried out, 'Can Abyor ever abandon his land?'⁹

Relations with the Rezeigat were thus normalized. Madibbo even agreed with Arob that his people would not be raided by the Rezeigat and that if they were captured, he would have them returned. Dinka sources specify names of people who had been captured and were returned because of Madibbo's intervention.¹⁰

Madibbo is said to have gone beyond that to ensure a compensation for the people of Arob who could not be redeemed. Ironically that compensation came from the raids that were conducted farther south. The people with whom the Ngok were compensated, though captured slaves, were not enslaved by the Dinka. Instead, they were adopted and affiliated into the adoptive families. Some of them are now prominent names in the leading lineages.

Relations with the Humr Arabs were ambivalent, combining friendship with some Arab leaders and hostility with others. "The man called Azoga was the Chief of the Homr Arabs" said Chol Piok.¹¹ "He came running for safety into the country of Arobdit [the Great or Senior Arob]. Arobdit then

seated him by his side. These Homr Arabs had been completely destroyed and dispersed into the wilderness [by wars and famine].”

“When the Arabs were destroyed by famine,” said Deng Abot, one of the leading grandsons of Chief Arob Biong, “Grandfather allotted the people of Aziz, Azoza's brother, the land from Rialnok up to Antel.

He settled them there. And he took the people of Azoza and settled them with him at Mithiang. Some of the Arabs he accommodated at a place called Dheen. Others he placed at Gung-bial. Yet others he settled at Gong-Mou.”

The relationship between Arob and Azoza was affirmed through a form of contractual friendship involving a ritual fusion of families. As Deng Abot explained, “Arob and Azoza took the oath of friendship. And Arob then told his people, ‘I do not want a single person throughout the tribe to take [steal or capture] anything from an Arab.’ The Arabs stayed there through the hard period into the new year. They survived well and then returned home.”

An Arab elder, Ibrahim al-Hussein, a descendant of Azoza, recounted the story of the striking association between leaders otherwise representing different and antagonistic ethnic and religious groups:

We are relatives of Arob, the son of Biong from the days of our ancestor Azoza. It was a friendship witnessed by Biong [Arob's father] himself; it was also witnessed by our ancestor Mugaddam, the Uncle of Azoza.

This is how the friendship began. Azoza was travelling with his cattle. He entered Dinkaland. There was a man by the name of Dut, “the Buffalo,” from Anyiel sub-tribe. He was a very strong man. When Azoza entered Dinkaland, Dut captured Arab cattle. Arob Biong had spiritual powers which had totally dominated Dinkaland. Even Dut was frightened of him. Arob sent for Azoza [to discuss the issue of their looted cattle.]

Azoza went to his brothers and they all came in front of Arob, the son of Biong. They said, “We no longer want the cattle; we have abandoned them. What we want is friendship and brotherhood. We want that the path between us be clear and that we live together as cousins.” From that moment, brotherhood was created.

Because of the importance associated with blood as a symbol of lineage-oriented ethnic identity and kinship, the two leaders conducted a ritual of blood fusion to consolidate their relationship. As Ibrahim al-Hussein

blood ritual to consolidate their relationship. As Ibrahim al-Husseini recounted, "Arob, the son of Biong, spilt his blood and my grandfather licked it; and Azoza spilt his blood and Arob, the son of Biong, licked it. They became relatives. Drums were beaten to celebrate the occasion."

In the autonomous local context of tribal relations, it was the Dinka who granted Arab favors. This in part at least explains the Arab level of tolerance for the Dinka's non-Islamic culture. According to Ibrahim al-Hussan, "That is the relationship between us. It began with a favor which Arob Biong did to our forefathers. This relationship was passed on to Kwol, the son of Arob. Our fathers too became men and had children. They remained together. Our fathers gave them gifts of horses and they continued to give our fathers cattle from the marriages of their daughters. It was a well-known relationship"

This example stands in striking contrast to the general animosity evident in much of North-South history. Cooperation and symbolic kinship were here sealed with blood fusion without permitting religion to be a divisive factor. And yet, the two contrasting situations are not separable. Indeed, they continuously interacted and influenced one another. Slavery itself was the result of that interaction and mutual influence. This was to become even more marked during the Mahdist Revolution as the process moved on through the transitional phase.

THE MAHDIST REVOLUTION

The Mahdist revolution for the Dinka signified a contradiction. The Mahdi was first heard of as a holy man, closely associated with their own Dengit, the Dinka spirit of rain and closest to God. The Mahdi, it was thought, embodied this spirit and had come to rid the country of foreigners and their oppressive, evil rule. For the Mahdists, those foreigners were the infidel Turks and Egyptians. To the Dinka, they were the Arab slave raiders who infested their land. The Dinka saw the Mahdi, therefore, as a source of salvation to all the Sudanese who had been victims of injustice and ungodly deeds by the slayers. He was a redeemer who would not discriminate between the Dinka and the Arabs, the heathen and the Muslims. His spirit was from God, transcendent and all-embracing like that of Dengit, which had fallen upon him. But in due course, the Mahdi and his revolution would degenerate in the eyes of the Dinka into just another Arab power from the North, predisposed to continue the despicable institution of slavery, inherently evil and ungodly.

During the early period of the Mahdist movement the Mahdi, in the words of Chief Deng Abot, “sent word from El Odeiya, saying ‘There

is a Great Chief called Arob whose name I heard while I was still far away there. I would like him to come and visit me.” Apparently, judging from the reputation of the movement for unscrupulous violence, the invitation was received with skepticism and apprehension. Deng Abot's account continues: “Many Chiefs had gone to visit the Mahdi and had been killed... . For two years, the people of Ngok prevented Arob from going to the Mahdi. They said, ‘How can you go where people are killed? It is Khalifa Abdullahi who cuts people's throats even before they reach the Mahdi.’” Arob eventually decided to go accompanied by Allor Ajing of the rival Dhiendior clan, who had become recognized as the deputy paramount chief of the Ngok Dinka.

Naturally the Mahdi, being a Muslim and an Arab, was viewed as closer to the Humr than to the Dinka; Humr leaders became the intermediaries when cooperative and part of the Arab-Muslim camp when hostile. “When the Mahdi came” said Ibrahim al-Hussein, the descendant of Azoza, “our fathers acted as escorts to Arob Biong” This was a turning point in the influence of the central powers on the local Ngok Dinka-Humr Arab relations, giving a decided advantage to the Arabs against the Dinka. This disturbed the balance of power and the mutual interest in peaceful coexistence in a strategic way. And yet, the traditional principles continued to exercise considerable influence. During the Mahdiyya, these principles were in part facilitated by the division among the Arabs.

The Humr Arabs divided into two camps in their attitude toward the Ngok Dinka. The wing that honored the traditional relationship sponsored the contact between Arob and the Mahdi. According to Ibrahim al-Hussein, Arob went and spent some time on the way with his Arab friends. “Then in October, our ancestors took Arob to the Mahdi. He went to declare his allegiance in a place called Um-Harras. The Mahdi said, ‘From this day, your name will be Abdel Rauf, instead of Arob.’ He initiated him with prayers and gave him a sword. Arob then returned home.” Here we clearly see the beginning of religious intolerance. To be accepted and respected, Arob had to be converted to Islam and have his name changed.

Arob's supposed initiation into Islam is a good example of how the Dinka have responded in the past to the Arab-Islamic culture, adopting certain traits but integrating and assimilating them into their own cultural mold. Arob's alleged conversion to Islam is hardly mentioned in the oral traditions of the Dinka except for the assertion that he had

gone to Jenna, the Arabic word for heaven or paradise. Certainly, his supposed adoption of the Islamic name Abdel Rauf is totally unheard of among the Dinka. That they prayed with the Mahdi is acknowledged, but with significant qualification. The renowned Ngok poet and singer Minyiel Row has these lines in a song about the history of Arab-Dinka relations: This feud [with the Arabs] began with our ancient leaders When Arob Biong left with Allor Ajing And travelled all the way to [the North]

There they met with the Mahdi

And they prayed together facing Sabah — [Eastward]

Allor asked with their heads bent to the ground “Arob, son of Biong, do you see God

Arob said, “No Allor, I do not see God But let us leave matters as they are.”

According to another version, “A meeting took place midway between Kostu and Tandelti between Arob, some Dinka notables and the Mahdi. The Dinka offered him gifts and declared their support to the Mahdi and their allegiance to Islam. They prayed communally with the Mahdi and then departed to Abyei.”¹² Through these methods, Arob was able to sidestep his Arab neighbors, the Humr Baggara Arabs, who were among the staunch supporters of the Mahdiya and sought the protection of the Mahdi from Arab slave raiders.¹³ While relations with the leading families of the Rezeigat and the Humr were cordial, there was still considerable traffic in slavery from enterprising Mahdists and other Arab traders, with the broad-based participation of adventurous Arab tribesmen. As Bulabek Malith put it: “What our grandfather [Arob Biong] did not like was the position of all the black peoples... . The Arabs used to steal people. When ... Arob came (to the North), he found the black people trapped inside a big fence... . And when they talked, Arob said to [the Mahdi], ‘All these black people are my people... . I am the leader. I am the man who speaks for them all. I have people here who ... steal my people.’”¹⁴

According to popular myth the Mahdi subjected Arob to the ordeal of

According to popular myth, the manna subjected Aroob to the ordeal of eating undesirable food to test the sincerity of his claim to the leadership of the black people.¹⁵ After passing the test, "Aroob was then given all the people who had been captured" Of course, Aroob could

not have been given all the black slaves, as the Dinka claim, but it is most likely that the Mahdi authorized that at least some of the Dinka slaves be freed and handed over to him as a gesture of goodwill. "The Mahdi then said to Arob, 'You will return and [the Arabs] will do no more harm to your people. None of your people will be brought here again.' He gave him a piece of earth, a spear, and a sword and said, 'Here you are going back home, a man without cattle, let him be helped; let cattle be divided; a man with five cows, let him give away two cows to the needy.'"16 The earth presumably symbolized the importance the Mahdi attached to making the land productive along with herding and sharing the cattle wealth.

As Bulabek Malith recounted, Arob "returned and then sent word to all the neighbouring tribes, including the Rek, the Twich and the Nuer, saying 'Let people come to identify their people' It is true, people came and identified their people and took them back to their areas."17 Those who wanted to stay under the protection of the Ngok Chief, and many did, were granted their wish and affiliated into families.

From these historical accounts emerges a picture of intense interaction between the neighboring peoples, often violent, sometimes peaceful and cooperative, mostly depending on relations between their respective leaders and the role of the central authority. During both the Turko-Egyptian and the Mahdist periods, both the Ngok and the Humr Arabs fell under the jurisdiction of Kordofan province. Since these administrations had only loose control over tribal life, the two groups remained politically autonomous, virtually independent within the provincial unity. They were generally friendly neighbors, and in that relatively cordial climate, cross-cultural influences took place. Historical records speak of the Ngok chiefs as "Arabized" and use such Arabic titles as Mekk, a local version of Malek [king], Sultan, and Nazir, a rough characterization of a complex process that affected both sides and that was selectively integrating.¹⁸

The Baggara, though in some respects considered among the more Arab of the northerners, are also the darkest in color, the most African in such cultural expressions as dress, music, and dance, and the most liberal in

their attitude toward women. Their economy is oriented toward cattle rather than camels, and, though they are fanatic Muslims, they are most pagan in their practice of Islam. This has to be associated with Dinka influence in view of the close interaction between the two

peoples. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim indirectly described this cross-cultural influence when he wrote about "the Africanization of the ... Baggara Arabs, many of whom are ebony black in colour and who, in order to cope with the physical conditions of Kordofan and Dar Fur (mostly wet and muddy) have deserted the camel for the bull which, however, they ride upon and generally treat as if it were a camel."¹⁹

K. D. D. Henderson has made observations that show specific Dinka influence on the Baggara Arabs. "They acquired Negro cattle and Negro blood, a distinctive dialect, distinctive habits, a characteristic long spear with a leaf-shaped blade and the wide-sleeved 'dervish' Jibba which distinguishes them from the Jellaba and the Jammala (camelmen)... . His women must be the freest in the Islamic world and in the grazing areas, the unmarried girls stride and ride clad only in a strip of cloth passed between their legs over a belt to fall to the ground fore and aft. They are great dancers and the drums will beat all night, sometimes all day as well for forty-eight hours or more."²⁰

One should, of course, not exaggerate the degree of cross-cultural influence between the Baggara and the Dinka for, as already indicated, Dinka cross-cultural adoption is restrained and often results in the assimilation of alien elements in such a way that their foreign origin is hardly recognizable. The same may be said of the Baggara or their indigenous African background. Among the factors that have constrained their mutual influence are the physical constraints on their contacts and interaction. The only time they interact intimately is during the dry season of several months, when the Arabs move with their herds to the river Kir, known as Bahr al-Arob in Arabic. Otherwise, a distance of more than a hundred miles of wooded no-mans'-land separates them, and the difficulty of the distance is compounded by a total lack of means of transportation. Until the British introduced motor transportation during the dry season, the only means of travel were walking or riding horses, bulls, or donkeys, which took several days in the wilderness.

That the Ngok Dinka have remained so culturally similar to the main Dinka groups farther South is itself indicative of both the physical

constraints on their contact and the cultural restraints in their cross-cultural adaptation and assimilation. Cooperation between individual leaders had a pacifying effect on the otherwise hostile relations between the Dinka and the Arabs, but the lines of demarcation remained drawn and the mutual prejudices largely unaffected. The Baggara are

among the proudest of their Arab identity and the quickest to refer to their more Negroid kindred farther South as slaves. They do not even realize that authentic Arabs are supposed to be much lighter in skin. All the Arabs they know are themselves and their kindred tribes.

Baggara prejudice against the Dinka is balanced by Dinka prejudice against the Baggara, both culturally and morally. The Dinka consider their manners ungentlemanly and childlike; their treatment of cattle demeaning to that noble animal; their custom of circumcising women despicable; and the conduct of their women, with their narrow strips of cloth concealing and yet focusing attention on their private parts, as evidence of their sexual lure and laxity. Ironically, to the Arabs, Dinka nakedness is evidence of extreme sexual permissiveness. All this merely illustrates the mutuality of prejudice and scorn between these closely interactive neighbors.

Ethnic cleavage is particularly reinforced and maintained through the mutual prejudice against intermarriage. Historically, as Paul Howell explained, the Baggara took Dinka women as slaves and concubines. These unions produced offspring who took the status of the father. But this form of union had no significant influence on the main body of the Dinka and the Arabs, since no social relationship was established between the respective groups of relatives. The Baggara, and indeed the Dinka, nowadays intermarry, but the established social relationship is between the immediate families, not with the remote members of the tribe. Such unions are not regarded as true marriages. As Howell put it, "The Baggara world is outside that of the Dinka and it cannot be spanned by intermarriage. To the Dinka, reciprocal marriages with other Dinka tribes with Nuer or Shilluk are possible though perhaps not desirable but are not possible with the Arab... . With the Arab sense of superiority derived from religious tradition and an inherent arrogance and with the Dinka's independence of spirit and inherent suspicion of the Arab, no marital association approximating to normal union in either society is possible."²¹

Although both the Arabs and the Dinka deny any racial link, they realize

that they have assimilated elements from each other and that neither group is pure. Studies of the Baggara show both the assimilation of the Dinka through their paternal Arab line and the marginal status of those Dinka of paternal slave origin who are still referred to as slaves even though institutionalized slavery has long been abolished. The Ngok also concede, albeit grudgingly, that there are Dinka

of Arab origin among them who have become assimilated, but are still identifiable, and that their own people who had been enslaved have reproduced with the Arabs, and their offspring constitute significant numbers among today's Baggara. They even know many Arabs, some of them in prominent positions among the Baggara, with Dinka strains through the mother or the grandmother and, in some cases, even through the male line. Among the Dinka, there are families where the father, the grandfather, or the great-grandfather bears an Arab name — Muhammad, Suleiman, Hathab al-Rasoul, Hassab Allah, and the like-and yet the descendants identify themselves unequivocally as Dinka.

Once in a while, derogatory comments are heard about families having Arab blood, which implies not only a slave origin, but also an impurity in their Dinka blood. Marital prospects into certain circles, particularly for a man, could be affected by such a background. But the level of personal and public acceptance by far exceeds discriminatory attitudes, unless the behavior of those concerned elicits a scathing response, and this often occurs in songs, where literary form licenses greater freedom of expression.

Cross-cultural influences continue today among the Ngok and the Baggara. Many Ngok Dinka speak Baggara Arabic very well, just as many Baggara Arabs are fluent in Dinka. In addition, any non-Arabic-speaking Ngok and any non-Dinka-speaking Baggara can conduct a conversation in a Dinka-Arabic concoction. But an even more evident feature of Ngok-Humr cross-cultural amicability was their relatively harmonious political coexistence during the devastating pre-British Afro-Arab hostilities. Much of this harmony was superficial, reflecting the diplomatic relations between their respective leaders that were dictated by the mutual needs of their immediate context. The Arabs needed seasonal pastures and water, since their land is waterless for about half the year; the Ngok wanted to be left alone to lead their traditional life. Both stood to benefit from harmonious relations and cooperation.

Cooperation through leaders during the traditional phase was facilitated by the fact that the two tribes were mutually more isolated, though

pastorally and commercially linked and relatively equal in their power and wealth. It has been less the case in the transitional and modern phases, when interaction has widened and areas of conflict have multiplied. During the transitional phase, which began with the

Turko-Egyptian administration and extended through the Mahdist period, the impact of the central authorities on the local level began to be felt. Imbalances in power equations began to emerge, mostly in favor of the Arabs and to the disadvantage of the Dinka. Nevertheless, the center always played the role of a mediator in Ngok-Humr relations. Such mediation was usually lacking in the larger North-South relations, since the center was nearly always synonymous with the North.

Since that time a crucial factor has been the link with the various levels of government up to the center and the official attitude, which changed depending on who was in control of the country. The Turko-Egyptian administration, though Islamic, was undesirable to both the Arabs and the Dinka. The Mahdist revolution was closer to the Arabs, but the diplomatic maneuvers of Ngok leadership neutralized its partiality to a degree. Condominium rule gave the Ngok Dinka the most impartial and therefore fair-minded administration to regulate intertribal relations.

CONDOMINIUM INTERVENTION

Most southerners at first resisted colonialism, but the Ngok made diplomatic initiatives to establish contact and negotiate protection with whoever assumed the seat of power in Khartoum. This, in fact, became an ongoing doctrine. The primary concern of the Ngok was how to counter the aggressive incursions of their immediate neighbors to the North. The Ngok, themselves a people with very high moral and religious standards, seemed to believe that justice was an overriding concept that transcended racial, ethnic, and even religious boundaries, and that it was the primary function of leadership to apply its principles. Whether the identity of the people occupying the seat of central government was white, brown, Christian, or Muslim, the Ngok expected their just cause to prevail. The British were to prove even more neutral than the previous administrations, the Turko-Egyptian and the Mahdist, in their regulation of Ngok Dinka-Humr Arab relations. What was more, Dinka values had a special appeal to the British administrators as they made the British task of enforcing law and order much easier than it was among the Humr Arabs, where crime was more rampant.²²

After the reconquest and the establishment of Anglo-Egyptian condominium rule in 1899, Arob was among the first of the southern chiefs

to get the message, make contact, and secure protection for his people under the new administration. Arob thus extended the contact he had established with the Arabs into an administrative arrangement with the central government that eventually institutionalized Ngok affiliation into the northern framework.

When Arob died in 1905, he was succeeded by his son, Kwol Arob, who immediately contacted the newly established Anglo-Egyptian regime to secure the protection of his people against the continuing Arab raids. Kwol Arob consolidated the Ngok connection with the modern northern administrative system.

Ali Julla, a prominent veteran of the Mahdist wars, was now back in the land of the Homr and was installed as their chief, replacing the family of Azoza. Hostilities between the Dinka and factions of the Humr Arabs were aggravated under his leadership, and sporadic raids by the Arabs increased.

“Ali Julla went and started to engage in the old thievery, stealing children from our area,” said Chol Piok. “Arab attacks extended southward, destroying Rekland. When Kwol saw it, he said, ‘Should our people go through this suffering again! Have the Arabs ... brought back the old word? What my father had resolved, have the Arabs truly brought it back!’” Kwol decided to take his complaint to the new British administration, carrying with him gifts of ivory.²³ To avoid being intercepted by the Arabs, he went by way of Nuerland in Upper Nile, on to Kadugli in Nubaland to the district headquarters at El Odeiya in Western Kordofan. “Kwol then explained the whole situation to the Government. He said, ‘How can it be that the country is in peace and my area remains the only one still under destruction? The person called Ali has made himself the Government.’ ... Kwol Arob gave a full account of all the things Ali was doing in the area... . The police were put onto mules and horses and dispatched... . Ali was fetched and brought under police escort... . Kwol again gave a full account of his complaints in front of Ali. Ali admitted them all... . Those were the days when the Government enforced good relations between people.”²⁴

K. D. D. Henderson wrote, "Kwal Arob, Chief of the Ngok, spared his people most of these troubles by coming to terms with the Homr and enrolling himself at Al Ubayyidh [Obeid] as a subject of Kurdufan. He was given a robe of honour in 1916 and ... assumed ... sovereignty over all the Ngok, and later over the Rueng Ajubba at Kerreita."²⁵

According to Chief Deng Abot, one of the senior sons of Kwol Arob,

the British then said, "You Kwol, the Arabs will now be in your hands. Ali will consult with you. If he has a case he cannot settle, he will refer it to you. You are the one with the oath-ashes."²⁶ Thus, in contrast to the current situation in which shari'a is imposed on non-Muslims, the Dinka were empowered by the British to administer their traditional oath to Arab Muslims. Deng Abot asserted, "Even I administered Dinka oath to the Arabs." Bulabek Malith concluded, "So it was Kwol Arob who was King of all the Dinka and the Arabs. He was the man who controlled the Arabs; it was not the Arabs who controlled us."²⁷

Dinka believe that Islam involves black magic of the type the Dinka regard as evil; it cannot, therefore, guarantee objective justice. According to Deng Abot, "The Arabs later developed their ways of killing people with the oracles of their religious men like the Fakis. But they used to be sworn on Dinka oath of ashes... . I am telling you the whole truth, leaving aside any words of lies. My father [Kwol Arob] continued to control the Arabs that way." These accounts, of course, tend to exaggerate the extent of Kwol Arob's power, especially as they insinuate that he had jurisdiction over all the Arabs, including those farther north in their tribal homeland, when his authority must have covered only those Arabs within his jurisdiction, whether through permanent settlement or as a result of seasonal migration.

Chief Kwol Arob, with the leverage of age and wisdom, was later to play a pivotal role in the selection of the successor to the Missiriya Arab chief, following the death of Ali Julla's son, Nimir, who had assumed the leadership from his aging father. According to Deng Abot, "Nimir's son, Babo, was still a very small boy. Chieftainship was nearly taken from him. Then Ali Julla, now a very old man, held my father's feet and kissed them... . As soon as Ali kissed my father's feet, my father's people said, 'Chief, do not utter another word. Even if Babo is small, so be it!'"

Babo Nimir himself spoke on the circumstances of his succeeding his father, highlighting the cooperation between the leaders of the Dinka and the Arabs in their handling of the affairs of their people:

— — — — —

The tribe, the Ajaiya, heard about [my father's death] and met at Abyei [the Ngok Dinka Headquarters] to select his successor. Chief Kwol of the Ngok Dinka and Chief El Haj Ajbar of the Falaiya were there. The District Commissioner ... also attended... .

I was under the Tamarind tree at Abyei, sitting in a tent. Chief Kwol had sent my grandfather a container of honey. I took the

fruit of the Tamarind tree, poured some water on it, and added honey to it. As I was drinking the water with the tamarind fruit and honey, I heard the voices of the people discussing... .

The people all agreed that the chieftainship be given to the son of Nimir. Nazir Kwol said,... . "Nimir died while his son was still small. But I heard him praise his son a great deal. And therefore, I support the idea that he should succeed his father as the Chief. And with the will of God I hope he will grow up to be a leader like his father." Those were the words of Nazir Kwol.²⁸

To the Dinka, Kwol Arob was the determining factor in the outcome. Presumably because of his age, he was recognized as the leading figure among both the Arabs and the Dinka. K. D. D. Henderson, who was the British district commissioner in the area in the late 1920s and early 1930s, later wrote, "The Government ... recognized Kwol's wisdom and hoped that Babo would learn from him, as he did."²⁹ The accommodation thus achieved between the Ngok and the Humr and the respect given to Kwol Arob gave an enhanced sense of security and dignity to the Dinka, and their leadership continued to foster amicable relationships with the Arabs.

Despite the exaggeration in the accounts of the Dinka about the place of their leadership in the dual Dinka-Arab context, it is significant that they perceived a parity and a respect within the relationship. In Deng Abot's recollection, "The Arabs remained under my father's control until he died... . My father used to hear the appeals from Arab courts." Even to the Arabs, Chief Kwol appeared to be more than an equal. The Arab elder Ibrahim al-Hussein, who applied the courtesy title of father to Kwol Arob, observed: "Our father Kwol became the Chief in the whole of this area. He established peace in the area... . It was a sweet period in the history of our people" Again, although al-Hussein was interviewed in Khartoum, his reference to "the whole of this area" must be understood as a reference to the context of Dinka-Arab interaction under the jurisdiction of the Ngok chief.

The British placed Chief Kwoi Arop in charge of all the neighboring Dinka tribes to the South, including the Twich and the Ruweng, from whom he continued to collect taxes and hear appeals. This remained the case for a good part of the condominium rule. For the British, therefore, Ngok leaders were not only instrumental to law and order within their jurisdiction, but they were also a vital point of entry and penetration into Dinka society, extending farther South.

The role Ngok leaders have played in promoting peace at the North-South borders through their connections with Arab tribes and successive administrations in the North is widely acknowledged among the Dinka, both in Ngokland and in the South. "It is only the family of Biong who, when disaster occurs as it has now occurred [in the Arab-Dinka hostilities of 1977], sacrifice their own lives," said Chol Pick. "And even when they suffer a major destruction, they will still remain patient and work for the good of the tribe. A Chief does not hold his country through the force of arms; he holds the country with his tongue. Even when the people of the tribe have died and died and died, it will be for him to hold the land eventually."

Atem Muoter of the Twich Dinka had even higher praise: "Our land is tied to Arob Biong and it was Arob Biong who used to rescue our people and return them from slavery... . Rian [the Chief of the Twich] ... encountered the Government in the home of ... Kwol Arob. Then they found Boldit [Chief of another Twich section] as a religious leader and gave him power to be a government Chief as well... . Arobdit was the Chief of all these areas. And when Arob's son, Kwol, came, the country continued to prosper under his leadership." In the words of Chief Makuei Bilkuei of Paan-Aruw, "It was [the family of Arob Biong] that saved us with the tongue of [their] forefathers."³⁰ "Most Dinkas didn't know what was going on," said Chief Giirdit of the Rek Dinka. "We didnt' know anything. Only the Ngok knew the Arabs... . And even the fact that there are Dinkas today — people are here because of ... [Arob]. It was ... [Arobdit] and [his son Kwol] who saved the people."

Beginning with the Mahdiyya, Chief Giirdit elaborated on the history of Arob's role in North-South relations, depicting the confederate nature of relations among Dinka leaders that is rarely reflected in the literature: "Word came that the Mahdi was liberating the people. So, contributions of remaining cattle and sheep would be made and sent to the Mahdi through ... [Arobdit]. Then ... [Arobdit] would pass them on. It would be my father here gathering things from his tribe, sending them to ... [Arobdit]. Yor Mayar on his side, Aguok, would bring his contributions to ... [Arobdit]. Mawin Ariik would come from the side of the Luac. And ...

Akol Arob would come from the Kongor side. All those Chiefs would gather and meet with ... [Chief Arob].”³¹ In another context, Giirdit enumerated more chiefs from other Dinka areas and added: “It is the big things of the country and how they

would run their country that they would meet and talk about. Such things as how people should relate to each other on the borders. Those were the ways of those big leaders of the past.”³²

Later, part of the Twich broke off to join the South under the leadership of Rian, who had been Arob's protégé. The partition was at least sanctioned, if not initiated, by the British on the grounds that the area was far too large for the administration of one chief. Other tribes were subsequently severed from the jurisdiction of Ngok leadership on the same basis. Indeed, the administrative status of the Ngok in Kordofan remained an anomaly with which the British were not entirely comfortable. Paul Howell wrote in a work published in 1951: “The Ngork Dinka of Western Kordofan are something of a problem. Situated as they are between the Baggara Arabs of the North and the main body of the Nilotic peoples in the South, they are in a peculiar position and the problem is whether they should be included in a Rural District Council in which Arabs must always predominate or whether they should be joined to kindred tribes further South. Should tribal and racial boundaries remain intact or should territorial associations be created in which tribe or race is of no consequence? There are purely practical arguments in favour of both such lines of political development.”³³

Henderson also commented on the anomaly of the Ngok situation on the North-South border:

Tidy-minded persons — British and Sudanese alike — were always suggesting that the Ngok be transferred to Southern administration. I resisted this partly because it would have been impossible to draw a fair boundary between them and the Humr, but chiefly because their presence in Kordofan provided an invaluable buffer-state and meeting ground and gave the Northern administration knowledge of and sympathy with the Nilotics. Further West, the Malwal and the Rezeigat were perfectly at loggerheads. To the East, the transfer of the Rueng to the Upper Nile Province had given rise to endless friction. But the relationship of the Ngok was excellent with the Humr on one side and the Twij on the other. Arabs with a grievance against the Twij or the Hijeir

[Rek], and vice versa, always approached Kwal in the first instance to act as an intermediary. I regarded [Kwol] as a most outstanding ruler and his people as a completely adult race.³⁴

As the British were about to leave the Sudan, it appears that the administration had changed its position and decided in favor of the Ngok's joining the South. The government encouraged, indeed inspired, the southern chiefs to persuade Chief Kwol Arob to join them. Chief Giirdit later recalled the discussion between them and Chief Kwol: "We talked — [Kwol] was brought by the Government — the Great Kwol, son of Arob; and [the Government] said, 'You, Kwol, you are among the Arabs, and you are also a Dinka. I would like you to unite with the other Dinka and become the District of Gogrial.'"35 Chief Makuei Bilkuei also recalled, "I talked to Kwol and said, ... 'These people will disgrace us later on. So why are you after [them]?' This is the word I said to Kwol, a word that was to come true."36

Kwol Arob chose to remain in the North, but he was not undiplomatic with his fellow Dinka chiefs. After a public announcement of his refusal to join the South, he pulled Giirdit aside and spoke to him. "Son of my father, what you tell me it is not that I do not know it. The Arab is a thief. Even though I am with them, I know he is a thief. If I were to pull away from him, he would destroy my things... . Even the land which is mine, he might say, 'It's my land.'"37

Thus, while recognizing the unity of the Dinka, Kwol argued that his presence in Kordofan was in the strategic interest of the South in general and the Dinka in particular. He maintained that position, balancing between North and South until the end of his days. His image remains towering in the memory of his people and of the neighboring leaders both North and South, all of whom acknowledge that he was a chief of great virtues and charisma.

LEADERSHIP OF NEEDLE AND THREAD

Despite the important historic role played by successive Ngok leaders on the South-North borders and especially by Arob Biong and his son, Kwol Arob, there is a general consensus that Kwol's son and successor, Deng Majok, was the most pivotal in consolidating the position of the Abyei area in Kordofan and making it a symbol of national unity. This was in part due to his personal ambitions and his need for allies in the North; in

part it was also a continuation of the family legacy of leadership at the crossroads. With a more developed view of national unity

than his forebears, Deng Majok metaphorically considered himself the needle and the thread that mended the two parts of the Sudan into one whole. The Ngok area became a national crossroads and a microcosm of the Sudan in much the same way that the Sudan is a microcosm of Africa.³⁸

Perhaps the most significant evidence of the manner in which the Ngok-Humr situation moderated the Dinka-Arab, South-North cleavage is the way Deng Majok took the friendship between their respective ruling families several steps forward and used it effectively to mobilize support in his power struggle against his father, Kwol, and half-brother, Deng Abot [also known as Deng Makwei]. He cultivated cordial relations with the Arabs in general and with Babo Nimir in particular. Babo Nimir, paramount chief of the Missiriya Arabs, had developed considerable influence with the British administrators, and Deng Majok used his contacts with him not only to promote his own rise, but to force his father out of power. Babo was to recall many years later the history of their friendship and how Deng Majok pursued his political ambitions:

In 1923, Deng came to visit us at Leu [the dry-season camp of the Arab Chief in Ngok territory]. That was the first time I actually saw him. He wanted to marry, and there was an understanding between our Father, Kwol Arob, and my father about his marriage.³⁹ My father had said to Kwol, "Deng is my son. When he comes to marry, let me know so that I can contribute cattle to his marriage. And when his wife produces children, my sons will have a share in the wealth his daughters will bring when they are married" All this had transpired long before my time. I heard of it only later. When I saw him in 1923, he was coming to collect the cattle from our dry-season camp at Leu. He came on a horse, and with him were four or five young men carrying spears. People said: "That is Deng. That is Deng Majok, the son of Kwol; that is Deng Majok, the son of Kwol."⁴⁰

Deng Majok won great respect from the Arabs even before he became chief, initially reflecting the high regard the Arabs had for his father. Babo's account continues: "When he arrived, people got up to receive

him. His horse was taken and unsaddled. A bed-seat was brought for him and placed next to my father's. Deng sat and conversed with my father...
. In the afternoon, he and my father went for

a walk to our cattle, which were grazing near the lagoon at Leu... . My father selected a number of cows for them... . The cattle were taken and driven away by the young men.”⁴¹ Babo succeeded his father when he was only thirteen and quickly rose to the position of an influential chief, whom Deng Majok befriended and won to his side against his own father. As Babo recalled:

I became close to Deng Majok, after my father had died and I became the head of the tribe. Deng was, of course, older than I, but we became very, very close friends. He would come to see me in our dry-season settlements, whether it be at Leu or Ngol or at Nugara. He would come and we would sit and chat. He would come with his followers. We would stay together for three or four or five days. And then he would return. At that time, the Nazir was Kwol; Deng was not yet the Nazir.⁴²

Babo's friendship with Deng Majok largely rotated around the question of succession to Chief Kwol Arob. Although Deng Majok was considered the best qualified for the leadership in the modern context, he was not favored by the traditional Dinka rules of succession. He therefore sought to win the support of Babo Nimir, and through him the British, to circumvent tradition in his favor. This fact is important to appreciating not only the nature of the relationship, but also the way it was perceived by the Dinka and its long-term significance on the relations between the respective tribes. Deng Majok's friendship with Babo was at first personal, but it ended up having an important bearing on a matter of vital significance to the Dinka, their leadership. But although the friendship had an influence on the relations between the tribes, it remained throughout rather personal and limited in its effect on the deep-rooted racial and cultural dispositions of the respective groups. If anything, it can be argued that Babo's interference in the choice of Ngok leadership had an irreversible and controversial effect on the destiny of the Ngok. For all these reasons, the story of succession to Chief Kwol Arob is more than a family history; it is an event that was both personal and collective to Deng Majok and the Dinka, and it had a profound effect on the future of the people at the sensitive North-South border.

The story of how Deng Majok took power from his father is an intriguing and complicated drama going back to the circumstances of his parents' marriage. Although Deng Majok's mother was the first to

be betrothed to Chief Kwol, she rejected him in favor of another man with whom she indeed eloped. Chief Kwol withdrew his cattle from the marriage, leaving one cow as a symbol of his initial intention. He married Deng Abot's mother and took her home. Deng Majok's mother became ill, supposedly the result of a curse for having rejected the chief. The prognosis was that she would die unless she and her family apologized and accepted the marriage. That was done. The question, however, was which of the two wives should be considered senior and therefore be the one to bear Kwol's principal heir. Deng Majok was the firstborn of his mother, and Deng Abot second to a sister. But, while the tribe regarded Deng Majok's mother as the first wife, whom the ancestral spirits had relentlessly pursued and who should therefore be the mother of the heir to the leadership, Chief Kwol thought otherwise, and he regarded Deng Abot's mother as the first. Although the two boys were close in age and grew up as equals in their assistance to their father, Kwol considered Deng Abot the heir to the first position in leadership even though Deng Majok distinguished himself early as a better administrator and leader in the modern intertribal context. Since he was particularly close to the Arabs, Deng Majok was favored by both the British and the Arabs. He and Babo Nimir plotted together to persuade the government that Kwol be retired, as he had become too old to govern, and be succeeded by Deng Majok.⁴³ As Babo's account recalled:

We met the British Commissioner and explained to him that Deng Majok was the true leader ... that his mother had been the first to be married, and although the cattle had been returned, that one cow which had remained had maintained the bond of marriage.

Between [Deng] and me there was also an oath of brotherhood ... we swore to be brothers. Of course, we were like brothers! In addition to that, he knew the circulating rumors kept saying, "Deng Abot, Deng Abot." He wanted to win me over to his side. So we concluded the pact of brotherhood.

He and I would sit and converse with the people. Then we would have dinner, and people would disperse, and he and I would sit conversing

alone, sometimes until 12 o'clock at mid-

night... . He would be with me for three days, or four days, and then he would leave.

Whenever I visited Abyei, the same thing would happen. He would come from the cattle-camp to visit me in Abyei. We would be together for five days and six days, sitting and conversing.⁴⁴

Following a series of intertribal wars in which Deng Majok distinguished himself over his father and his half-brother as a good administrator and peacemaker, the British moved to retire his father and to have one of his two sons succeed him as paramount chief. The British clearly indicated a preference for Deng Majok. The sacred spears, which the Dinka consider the source of spiritual power for the chief, were left with Kwol, who remained the spiritual leader on the understanding that upon his death, they would be passed on to Deng Majok. Kwol died only two years later and bequeathed the spears to Deng Abot, stipulating that he would be the spiritual leader while Deng Majok would take the position of government chief. Since such a separation was unknown in Dinka tradition and would inevitably undermine the authority of Ngok Deng Majok as chief, Kwol's bequest was disputed. The crisis almost resulted in a civil war, with Kwol's clan and tribe following his will and most of the other tribes backing Deng Majok. In the end, the intervention of the government settled the matter decisively in favor of Deng Majok. Babo's role in influencing the outcome, however discreetly, also indicates the obviously more favorable position of Arab leaders with the British who saw the North as more advanced and more civilized than the South. This disparity would ironically place the proud and ambitious Deng Majok in competition with his friend and ally Babo Nimir.

Before the rivalry over power put Deng Majok and Babo Nimir in conflict, their friendship was a major factor in the cordial relations between the Ngok Dinka and the Missirya Arabs, which continue to be noted by leaders and scholars alike. Commenting on Deng Majok's friendship with Babo, Achwil Bulabek, a close associate and political ally said: "The genuine friendship that can exist between two sons of chiefs I saw for the first time between ... [Deng Majok] and Babo Nimir. Their relations were

excellent.”⁴⁵ That narrow bond at the top became the link between their respective tribes, strong but limited and precarious.

In the intertribal assemblies that bordering provinces held annually

the Ngok and the Homr always stood as one block against the southern tribes, including their fellow Dinka. Again, while the depth of this personal relationship should not be overestimated, it is obvious that ethnic barriers were effectively moderated, if not transcended, by a relatively equitable framework of unity in diversity. The Arabs clearly saw this as a promotion for the Ngok Dinka, in fact for Deng Majok, whom they flatteringly claimed to have become an Arab and no longer a Dinka, a praise that thinly disguised a racial slur, not only to the Dinka, but to Deng Majok himself.

In 1951 the Ngok were again given the option of joining the southern provinces of Bahr al-Ghazal or Upper Nile. The British said that they were offering this alternative because the Ngok were racially and culturally different from the bulk of the people with whom they shared the district and the province. It was therefore expedient for them to join their kindred groups in the South.

Richard Owen, governor of Bahr al-Ghazal, had been district commissioner of western Kordofan, and the Ngok in general and their chief in particular greatly admired him. He did his best to persuade them to accept the British proposal, influencing most Dinka chiefs of Bahr al-Ghazal to attempt to persuade the Ngok chief to join with them in the South. A group of leading Bahr al-Ghazal chiefs of Gogrial district visited the Ngok and used various methods of persuasion, including promising to be led by Deng Majok. Again in the words of Giirdit:

More recently ... we spoke with Deng Majok. We went and talked to him... . The British told him, "You are wanted by your people of the South." We were all gathered: the chief of Ajuong (Yor Mayar), Boldit, the family of Rian, and others. We talked a great deal. I said ... "You, Deng Majok, ... we discussed the matter with your father a long time ago. And your father told me the truth. But what my uncle told me no longer holds. We must now leave it and unite with you... . We will make you our shield. And you cannot take our shield and turn it to the Arabs." ... We discussed the matter a great deal... . Then we left the matter, hoping we would meet again to discuss further.⁴⁶

The Arab elder Ibrahim al-Hussein, a descendant of the Arab leader Azoza, with whom Deng Majok's grandfather, Arob Biong, had entered into a pact of friendship, gave this account of the consultations that ensued on the issue:

Deng consulted with us. He got on his horse. And with him were all the omdas and a number of sheikhs... . We were on the farm in the area called Ajbar. The crops were ripening. We poured in from the villages on the surrounding highlands... . We found them settled on the farm. I brought a bull with me, a fat young bull. I told the young men to slaughter it. It was slaughtered. The chiefs were seated. We went and brought grain from the farm for their horses. As we left them to rest, Deng said to us, "I would like you all to come back this evening. I would like to talk to you." [The Arabs left and then returned in the evening as Deng Majok had requested. This time they came with their elders.] He said to us, "I went to see the governor, the Englishman. And he said to me, 'The English are about to leave. Their period of rule in the Sudan is coming to an end.' And he said to me, 'Join the south.' I said to him, 'Why should I join the South?' And he said, 'Listen to my advice; join the South.' And he said to me, 'You see, you have a brother on the White Nile; he is going to be a member of the Senate.' I told him I was going to consult with my people. So I have come to seek your views. What is your opinion?"⁴⁷

It is significant that Deng Majok specifically mentioned the British reference to the prospects of a southern Dinka chief's joining the Senate, which the Sudanese associated with the House of Lords in the British system. Presumably he wanted to draw the attention of the Arabs to the prospects of greater status and the leadership role that he would be sacrificing by not joining the South, thereby implicitly obligating them to find compensational rewards for him within the northern context. But of course, nothing along those lines was ever made explicit.

The Arabs were apparently stunned by what Deng Majok had told them, according to al-Hussein's recollection: "Our fathers, who were elderly people, did not even understand what he was saying. 'Son Deng,' they said, 'what sort of a thing are you saying?' I said, 'Listen Deng, go and tell that Englishman who asked you to join the South that he found you a northerner. The English found us as brothers from a long way back. We were brothers when the Turkish government came. The Mahdiya also found us brothers. And when the English came, they found us sitting together on one rug. The South is not for you; it is not for you.' We said a

great deal to him.”⁴⁸

Deng Majok then revealed to them his own intentions, which were

in full accord with their position: "In front of all the people assembled he said, 'Very well! That was what I wanted. We are not going to the South. That is my opinion.'"49

Some Ngok Dinka had the erroneous impression that joining the South was a physical move from the area rather than a mere change of administrative affiliation and borders on the map. But the main point in Deng Majok's argument was that the Ngok Dinka, in particular the leadership, should continue to play a bridging role on the North-South borders. To some people, by choosing to play a bridge between North and South, Deng Majok was simply continuing the tradition of his forefathers. His grandfather Arob had established the link; his father, Kwol, had taken a determining position; and, as the Ngok elder Chol Pick put it, "Deng Majok decided to follow the word of his father."50

Chief Babo also saw that the relationship between himself and Deng Majok and the stability it brought to the interaction of their groups reinforced a long tradition. "[T]he relationship between the Ngok Dinka and the Missiriya, in particular the Homr, is one which predates me and Deng. It predates even our fathers and our grandfathers. It is a relationship that goes back a long way. Our fathers came and found this relationship prevailing. And we came and found the relationship prevailing."51 On the other hand, Babo concedes, "The strong cordial ties which prevailed between the Arabs and the Dinka Ngok during the last phase were very much due to the brotherhood between me and Deng Majok."52

Ibrahim al-Hussein believes that Deng Majok chose to remain in the North because of the recognition and respect he enjoyed from both the Government and the Arabs: "Here in the North, Deng was highly respected by the government of the English and ... by the Arabs as a leader... . When an Arab woman saw him pass by, she would take pleasure in greeting him, 'Chief Deng, peace be upon you.' They knew him very well — all the Arabs, the Ajaiyra and the Felaita regarded him highly."53 This again highlights the degree to which Arab acceptance of Deng Majok was largely personal, almost as though he were a unique

Dinka. The cordiality of relations between the Ngok and the Homr was thus perceived as inherited from the ancestors, but mostly consolidated and ensured through the Arab bond with Deng Majok personally.

With his identity recognized and respected beyond the dividing line,

Deng Majok could then afford to be utilitarian in his political calculations without endangering his leadership among his own people, the Dinka. Reactions indicate that his calculations were accurate. Monyluak Row, a Ngok elder, stressed the practical considerations behind Deng Majok's decision. "Deng Majok used to say that he could not join the South because the standard of living of the people of the South was not as good as that of the people of the North. The reason why [he] liked the people of the North was because of the things we wear, these clothes. There was nothing else. Where people told us to go had little to offer."⁵⁴

Nyanjur, one of the middle daughters of Deng Majok, elaborated on the attraction of the North for her father in this way: "It was Father's own efforts that made Abyei what it is today as a town. And how did he do that? It was not because of his relations with the South; it was because of his relations with the North. That was how Abyei came to build shops, a dispensary, schools, and other services. Father left Abyei in a 'Thank God!' situation. All that was the result of his relationship with the Arabs."⁵⁵

But according to Nyanbol Amor, Deng Majok's second wife, his preference for the North over the South was only a matter of degree, for he felt a sense of belonging to both: "He was able to combine ... the South and the North, though the North was a little more favored by him. Most of his activities outside his tribe were toward the North, but he also maintained friendship with southern chiefs, with whom he met periodically. And those among the southerners who knew him well were not disturbed by his close relations with the Arabs because they realized that he benefitted the Dinka through those relations."⁵⁶

"Deng Kwol was like a guard at a gate between the Arabs and the Dinka," said Chief Chier Rian of the Twich Dinka in the South. "He was the Dinka voice among the Arabs. He felt that if he moved from the Arabs, the Dinka would have nobody looking out for them among the Arabs. That is why Deng Kwol remained in the North."⁵⁷

Malith Mawlen, also from the Twich Dinka, shares the view that Deng

Majok's refusal to join the South was a ploy in favor of the South. "Deng Majok said that if he came to the South, the Arabs would be frightened by our unity and would treat us as strangers. If anything that belonged to us were plundered, nobody could reclaim it. The Arabs would say that we are aliens. But now that I am on the border, they fear me. If I went to reclaim something that belonged to the Twij, the

Nuer, or the Malual, they would say that Deng was the person responsible on the border.”⁵⁸ Malith Mawlen concluded, “At this point I cannot comment on whether the Ngok should come here to the South or not. What I can say is that the descendants of Arob Biong are well known as the people who guarded our borders with the Arabs.”⁵⁹

There is an analogy between the southern decision at the Juba conference to accelerate independence by cooperating with the North and the attitude of the Ngok in favor of remaining in the North instead of joining the South. Just as the southerners hoped to rely on the supervision of the British in their North-South relations while they speeded their own progress, the Ngok relied on the impartiality of the government, first British and then, though to a lesser extent, national. But the Ngok decision to remain in the North was not final. The central government authorities were aware of the fact that, because of their lack of political development and their inexperience with the politics of the modern state, the Ngok did not fully realize the consequences of their decision. They were therefore given five years to change their minds if they so desired.

The inclusion of the Ngok in the newly formed Missiriya District and Rural Council, in which they composed only ten per cent of the membership, eventually aroused tensions between them and the Homr. Confrontation first came when Babo Nimir was selected as paramount chief to be the administrative and judicial head of all the tribal chiefs in the district, a move that Deng Majok opposed on the grounds that his tribe was ethnically and culturally “southern,” despite its being in the North, and it therefore had to be governed by Dinka law and custom, akin to that which prevailed in the South. The British agreed with him, and the Ngok remained autonomous within the administrative bounds they shared with the Homr.

A foundation for this special status had already been laid. In accordance with a special order by the governor-general, Ngok courts were governed by the Chiefs’ Courts Ordinance, which applied to the southern provinces, and not by the Native Courts Ordinance, which applied to the

North. In the South appeals from chiefs were heard by their own peers through an elaborate intertribal court system, but the Ngok paramount chief was virtually the final authority in matters of customary law and a very powerful ruler, whose decisions were rarely challenged. Because the Ngok chiefs had such a grip on the situation, law and order, and therefore peace and security became more effectively

entrenched there than anywhere else in the Dinka world. Internal warfare totally ceased, and, despite occasional attempts, intertribal wars involving the Ngok also virtually disappeared. The Ngok area became a harmonious point of contact, a secure bridge, and a free market between the North and the South.

The Ngok's moral and spiritual values, their deference to their divine leaders, and the effect of governmental power all combined to make them remarkably responsive to law and order, especially in comparison with the Missiriya, who were notoriously militant and unruly. Sir Gawain Bell, who served in the area as district commissioner from 1947 to the end of 1949 shortly after Deng Majok had assumed full leadership, had this to say about him and his people: "I can't remember that we ever had any serious crime in that part of the District. Among the Baggara of Missiriya, there were frequent tribal quarrels and fights and disturbances. There was a good deal of serious crime: murders and so forth; and the same applies to the Hamar in the North... . The Ngok Dinka were a particularly law-abiding people. Deng Majok ... kept his people happy and content, looked after their affairs, saw that justice was administered, and I cannot recollect that either within the tribe or as between the tribe and the Baggara, they ever had any serious trouble when I was down there."60

Deng Majok, unlike the Arab chiefs, followed gun control laws to the letter, ruling out any illegal possession of arms in his area, while the Arabs accumulated weapons illegally and in large numbers. As one Ngok elder explained. "The Arabs started their illegal acquisition of guns while Deng Majok was still alive... . Chief Deng Majok would never tolerate anybody doing anything against the law even if it were done very discreetly... . He did not behave the same way Arab chiefs like Babo did. Had he permitted the Dinka, he would have died leaving his people armed with guns... . But ... Deng Majok believed that all his people should follow a straight and clear path."61

Although fear of government reprisal was a factor in this approach, the Ngok Dinka believe that Deng Majok's rigid conformity to the law was

largely the result of his commitment to what is inherently right and avoidance of wrong. His effectiveness in securing the obedience of his people to his legal and moral code is in turn attributed to his combining the secular power of the government and the spiritual authority of divine leadership. Babo Nimir is said to have recognized that dimension of Dinka leadership and to have used it to explain

Deng Majok's superior performance in commanding the obedience of the Dinka:

When the Government asked Babo during the last destruction (1965), saying "When Deng Kwol says his word, that ends any problem; all his people listen to what he says. Nothing else goes wrong among his people. But your people continue to go and destroy [other] people. Does this come from you or do your people think of it by themselves?"

Babo said, "But I am not like Deng... . Deng has two authorities; he has the Government power to arrest a person. He also has something else. When people contravene his words, he has Big [Sacred] Spears. If he says to a person, 'So and so, is it you who does this and that to my people? The spear of my Father will kill you,' that person will die. That is why the Ngok fear him. It is not that he has frightened the people himself; it is the Spears. He has two authorities, the chieftainship with which he kills people and the government power with which he arrests people.⁶²

Ironically, the authority and influence of the Ngok chief is attributed not only to divine leadership, complemented by government power, but also to Arab cultural influence. As David Cole and Richard Huntington observed, "The Ngok Dinka are the most hierarchical of all Nilotic peoples, a situation that seems rooted in Ngok traditions, deepened through Arab contacts and exacerbated by the colonial state."⁶³ At the same time, the relative isolation of the Ngok from both Arab hegemony and government domination is said to have enabled them to develop a cohesive system that effectively amalgamated their own traditions with external influences. Paul Howell observed, "The Ngok have not been subjected to an intensive system of administration. Their country is practically inaccessible during the rains from May to November, the nearest point which can be reached by car during that period being Muglad, 130 miles away... . Administration consisted mainly of occasional visits by the District Commissioner rarely totalling more than a few weeks in the year. For this reason ... the Ngok have been subjected to less external influences than most Nilotic tribes today... . This has had a definite result in the political organization of the tribe.⁶⁴

According to Howell, the remoteness of the Ngok and the adminis-

tration's need for local representation combined to foster the reinforcement of Ngok leadership along the lines of Arab centralization of authority. He noted that a "Chief with considerable autocratic powers has been in the process of evolution over a number of years... . There is no serious danger in this except that former administrative policy has tended to build up an effective autocracy in an essentially democratic society; a system which might prove a stumbling block to the introduction of a democratic system of local administration.⁶⁵

Howell's message should be seen in the light of his experiences among the other Nilotics, particularly the Nuer, in whose area he served and on whom he wrote his doctoral dissertation.⁶⁶ He admired the Nilotic democratic spirit, and the authoritarian system of the Ngok leadership must have seemed to him an undesirable anomaly. Be that as it may, the centralization of autocratic authority under Chief Deng Majok was consciously fostered and consolidated by the Ngok leadership's jealous protection of its autonomy. According to one elder:

Deng Majok, talking to the Government representatives about what he deemed to be the best way of ruling his area said, "In my area, people used to fight to the death in the past, particularly the tribes of Abyor and Mannyuar; but my main concern now is to see to it that no further fights take place, and should this be realized, there will prevail a better atmosphere for security, education, and progress. And to achieve this, the official contact or communication between the authorities and the people should be solely through me; I should be the only link between the government and my people. If there is a direct communication with individuals, anarchists will take advantage of that and the whole area will be in chaos. Whatever message the Government wants to convey to the public should first come to me and I will transmit it to the people through the Omdas, sheikhs, and the clan heads, until it reaches the individual. I can assure you that this system will work the best." Deng Majok, through this policy managed to be the only person in the entire area to whom the authorities talked and listened. And when the government representatives left the area after their short visits, he would for his part summon his chiefs to pass on whatever he deemed fit to communicate to

them.⁶⁷

Apparently government's policy of indirect rule and the remoteness of the Dinka made Deng Majok's policy of restricted contact and com-

munication between the officials and the people quite appealing. Deng Majok became virtually the ultimate authority over his people. As one elder put it, "Deng Majok was the governor. And he was the judge. And he was the chief. All three were his responsibilities in his own tribe. . . . And his decisions would be backed up wherever the matter might go."68

Chapter 8 Crisis at the Crossroads

The divisive identities that have come to dominate national politics in the Sudan are increasingly being drawn along the lines of the North-South dichotomy. For the Ngok Dinka and the Humr Arabs this dichotomy on the national level has created a crisis where their cultures intersect. The growing nationalist aspirations of the Ngok-Dinka toward the South have passed through several sequential phases: first, the North's assumption of colonial control over the South at independence, which imposed Arab hegemony on the people of the South; second, the increasing alignment of the local identities with their southern counterparts in the North-South divide; third, the rise to leadership by the educated elite, nearly all of whom identify with southern nationalism; fourth, the loss of autonomous control by local leaders and their subsequent inability to negotiate local arrangements for peaceful coexistence in their traditional manner; fifth, the resulting centralization, which accounts for the linkage and alignment of the central and local forces of Arab-Islamic identity; and sixth, the linkage of the Ngok-Humr situation to North-South confrontation and armed conflict. These factors are all closely interconnected.

INDEPENDENCE AND ARAB HEGEMONY

Ngok autonomy was possible not only because of the diplomatic successes of the Ngok leaders at a very sensitive racial, tribal, and religious juncture, but primarily because the central government under the British gave them protection against their neighbors. Independence considerably diminished this third-party protection, as the central government was occupied by people identified as Arabs and therefore partisan.

Deng Majok ensured the government's relative neutrality through his unwavering commitment to unity which was manifested in his

staunch stand in favor of remaining in the North. Ibrahim Muhammad Zein, an educator from Khartoum, recalled that Deng Majok distinguished himself in the Missiriya rural council through his commitment to unity. "I used to hear a great deal about his personality, and among ... the things that were said to have been said by Deng Majok ... was: 'I consider my being in Abyei for the Sudan as a whole to be like a needle and a thread which binds the two parts of the toub [a sari-like dress] into one piece.' These words ... made people look to Chief Deng Majok as a great leader and thinker"¹

Not only did Deng Majok object to Dinka appeals' being heard by Babo Nimir, but in the words of Ali, one of his senior sons, he "would never accept being placed in a subordinate status"² Some people felt that Deng Majok much preferred remaining in the North because being a Dinka chief among Arabs would give him a unique status that was superior to being classified as either a northerner or a southerner. Hassan Biong Deng elaborated on his father's sense of pride as a Dinka in the northern context.

He was always stressing, in every move he made, that he had a special status... . Every single time he found difficulty breaking through, he would draw the attention of the authorities to the fact that he was not racially or culturally part of Kordofan's administration. This was especially the case whenever there was an issue which required the approval of the majority in the district. If he felt that something would prejudice Dinka interests ... he would always draw the attention of the administration to the fact, arguing that he should not be regarded as a member of the same cultural group as the other tribes or be required to adhere to the cultural ways of the other members of the district. But he would never lag behind in matters that required the full representation of his tribe as a separate entity... . He never gave up the fundamental cultural identity and values of the Dinka.³

And yet, Biong noted that Deng Majok was fully integrated into the Arab context. Proof of this was that the Arabs in his district elected him president of the council. Deng Majok was clearly a paradox.

Indeed, the Arab chiefs rebelled against their paramount chief by supporting, even engineering, Deng Majok's election as president. This event, the climax in the political rivalry between Babo Nimir and Deng Majok, was largely the result of the internal differences among the

Arab chiefs. Nevertheless, Deng Majok's election by the Arab majority was, and has remained, a symbol of his stature as a hero of national unity between the South and the North. On one occasion, when the Arabs were provoked into violent confrontation by the Malwal Dinka of Bahr al-Ghazal, the Ngok joined the fight on behalf of the Humr against their fellow Dinkas, a reflection of how significantly the racial, ethnic, and religious barriers had been transcended. And yet on another occasion, when the Humr Arabs provoked a fight with the Rek by amputating the arms of a man and using them to beat their drums, the Ngok Dinka rallied in support of the Rek because of what they saw as an intolerable insult to the dignity of fellow Dinkas. The position they took in this instance also indicated their continued pride in and solidarity with their race and ethnicity.

Through his unflinching defense of his people, his self-assertiveness as a Dinka among Arabs, and his acceptance by the Arabs not only as an equal but even as a leader of their combined Dinka-Arab council, Deng Majok gave the Ngok much to be proud of, even though they were a minority in the northern Arab context. In the words of the Arab elder Ibrahim al-Hussein, "Deng kept the Arabs in one hand and the Dinka in the other hand. He protected the Dinka and he protected the Arabs. He guided the Arabs with words of wisdom as he guided the Dinka. And the Arabs fully accepted his word. The Arabs looked to Babo's chieftainship only when they were back in Arabland. But when they were in Dinkaland, their chief was Deng Majok"⁴

Babo Nimir himself confirmed Deng's popularity among the Arabs, even though he and Deng Majok had become rivals. "By God, we in our area had not the slightest doubt that no man who went before Deng Majok would ever leave feeling injustice... . With Deng Majok, we felt assured of the protection our people would get whenever they went there... . whenever there were problems among my own Arab tribes, I would send for him and he and I would go together to solve the problems. And the Arabs would accept his word. He was very highly respected by the Arabs"⁵

Just as the friendship between Babo Nimir and Deng Majok fostered cordial relations between the Arabs and the Dinka, their inherently conflictual political rivalry symbolized and contributed to the deterioration of Arab-Dinka relations. This was compounded by Babo's link to the inner circles of the sectarian power structures at Sudan's political center. A leader of a people who had been among the staunch supporters of the Mahdiyya, Babo cemented his relationship with the Mahdi

family by marrying the daughter of Sayyid Abdullahi al-Fadhil al-Mahdi, the niece of Sayyid Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi.⁶ During the 1954 elections for the constituent assembly, Babo invited his father-in-law, Sayyid Abdullahi al-Fadhil, from Omdurman to stand for the Umma party in the combined Dinka-Humr constituency, although he had never been to that part of the country before. The arrangement offended the Ngok, who interpreted it to be giving away their country as a bride-price, but of course, al-Fadhil won the elections.

Ngok subtribal leaders, certainly not without Deng Majok's discreetly concealed knowledge, acquiescence, and perhaps instigation, raised a criminal case of electoral corruption against Sayyid Abdullahi al-Fadil, the first such charge to be brought against a prominent member of the Mahdi family. Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub, a lawyer who was to hold successively the positions of foreign minister and prime minister, defended the accused. Not surprisingly, Sayyid al-Fadil was acquitted, and Deng Majok succeeded relatively well in distancing himself from the case, even though Babo and his associates were sure that he had been involved.

The Ngok saw their merger with the Humr into one constituency and the election of Sayyid al-Fadhil to the parliament as indications of the change of policies in favor of the Humr. But there was more. In the council, things generally went the northern way. The language of the proceedings was Arabic, which many of the Dinka delegates could not understand fully, and usually only Deng Majok spoke. Other matters relating to the distribution of government cars and other services convinced the Ngok of their less-than-equal status.

During the South-North civil war of 1955–72, Deng Majok's identity as a southerner and the ambivalence of being a Dinka among Arab tribes became most pronounced. For a considerable part of the war, the Ngok area remained sheltered from its effects, to a large extent the only secure area in the southern cultural-ethnic-geographic complex. As the war continued to intensify, however, the Ngok began to sympathize and identify more and more with the South, and some of their young men

began to join the military wing of the southern movement — the Anya-Nya — and even assumed leading positions in the struggle.

One of the local rebel leaders was Ahmed (Arob), the eldest son of Deng Majok. Ahmed completed his secondary education in the North, at Hantoub, one of the leading secondary schools in the country. The British appointed him as a local government officer. At the request of his father, he was posted to Abyei. A power struggle with his father

and the Arab resentment of his position led to his premature downfall and eventual rebellion, despite the fact that he was a Muslim, culturally Arabized, and at Hantoub had been a Muslim Brother.

During the mid-1960s, rumors began to reach Abyei that the local Anya-Nya might attack under the command of Ahmed Deng. This naturally heightened the anxiety of the Arabs. One incident after another fueled the fire that ignited the 1965 Ngok-Humr hostilities, in which several hundred people, and perhaps a significant number more, lost their lives. As it was during the dry season, when the Arabs were on their seasonal migration southward, the war was fought on Ngok soil, and the Arabs initially suffered defeat. But, with superior arms, they retaliated with a vengeance that devastated the Dinka.

Abd al-Basit Saeed, from the Missiriya, a university lecturer who later became under secretary in the Ministry for Peace in the post-Nimeiri government of Sadiq al-Mahdi, has given a commendably objective, detailed account of the developments in Ngok-Humr relations and their linkage to the North-South confrontation. He attributes the hostilities between the Ngok and the Missiriya to two events. The first was an attack in September by the Anya-Nya in the southern town of Gogrial, in Bahr al-Ghazal province, where some Missiriya had settled as merchants. The second occurred on December 6, 1964, when northerners and southerners clashed in Khartoum as a result of rumors surrounding the delayed return of the southern minister of the interior, Clement Mboro, from his fact-finding and goodwill visit to the South. "Subsequent to this incident, scores of southerners fled Khartoum to the Southern Region carrying with them the frustrating stories of the Sunday genocide of Southerners in Khartoum"⁷

Although news of the Gogrial raid had spread in Missiriya territory, the Arabs could not take revenge because it was during the rainy season and they were still far North in their permanent residences. Their outrage was manifest as soon as they got to the river in their seasonal migration southward. As far as they were concerned, the conflict was with the ethnic southerners, the Ngok included. By the same token, the news

coming to Ngokland about the Khartoum genocide provided the Dinka with a cause for outrage. "This chain of national and local struggles in 1964 served to create a bench-mark in tribal relations in Abyei District subsequently"⁸

The Missiriya believed that any Nilote was a party to the conflict and is a potential object of revenge. The conception of tribal identi

fication and association did not serve the Missiriya to objectively distinguish between friend and foe among those groups they encounter; for the Missiriya, the Nuer and Shilluk were also Dinka. The ... Nilotes ... also took every Arab whether Ajairya, Falaita or a merchant from farther northern Sudan, for a potential enemy, and an objective of skepticism, mistrust and possibly revenge.

Knowing that one of the sons of Deng Majok [Ahmed Deng] ... was one of the leaders of the Anya-Nya forces, the Missiriya could not believe that the Ngok were not party to or involved in the raid onto their brethren in Gogrial.⁹

Thus, "the ground was set for violent confrontation, the primary causes for which were anchored in the national struggle between North and South. But it was relegated by provincial authorities to 'tribal' conflict"¹⁰

A series of gruesome and violent incidents took place. In one, "The Kalabne Arabs fired at Higair [Rek] Dinka, killing two and the others fled. Police investigations later found that the arms of the dead had been amputated, and the corpses mutilated"¹¹ Furthermore, the Arabs set fire to Ngok villages and, in the process, looted and killed at random.

Deng Majok and his Arab counterparts, Babo and Ali Nimir, were then at al-Obeid, the provincial capital, to receive the Queen of England, who was paying an official visit to the country. But an accusing finger is pointed to another member of the leading Arab family: "Police records say that the President of the local Court at Al Muglad was the suspect; and that ... he had been seen burning deserted Dinka huts ... His presence in Abyei during the crisis was confirmation of his involvement. The suspect was immediately suspended... . The District Commissioner ... demanded that charges be pressed against him and that he should be put to trial"¹²

Abd al-Basit Saeed, citing police reports, explained that the Arabs transported fighting squads from Muglad, neighboring villages, and camps of the nomads to battlefronts southward, using commercial lotties belonging to the local merchants. The Arabs used firearms, "to the detriment of the Dinka who were using locally made spears"¹³ And yet

detachment of the Dinka who were using locally made spears.¹³ And yet, with surprising lack of scruples, the Arabs “sent delegations to the central government demanding that the Missiriya should be armed so that they may be able to fight back the insurgent Southern outlaws.”¹⁴ According to the police reports, “In fact, this claim is unfounded and

baseless, because there is no evidence of a single case of death among the Missiriya during the fighting in which a victim was killed by a firearm. On the contrary it has been proven in many incidents that it was the Missiriya who were using firearms”¹⁵

Perhaps the most devastating events occurred farther North in the Missiriya towns. In the atmosphere of tension and violence that prevailed southward, “people from the South in these northern towns became open targets for assault, looting, murder, and at least intimidation by the resident northern majority”¹⁶

Although southerners sought protection from the authorities or asked to be transported back home, “subsequent events showed that they received no protection even when in the custody of police”¹⁷ Eventually people were transported to Abyei from al-Fulah, al-Muglad, and Babanusa, but some of those in Babanusa were victims of the worst massacre in the conflict. According to a police report that Abd al-Basit Saeed describes as “extremely self-incriminating” police protection at Babanusa, if it existed at all, was the worst.

Huge masses of women and children invaded the police station where Southerners had gathered seeking government protection, and had been accorded such status by sheltering them in available rooms inside the police station. [Arab] women and children were armed with kerosene ... [which they threw] onto the defenseless Southerners and set fire to them. When the local Government District Commissioner arrived ... in the afternoon, everything had gone. Fire was still burning on the dead corpses inside the rooms. He found the master-sergeant policeman who was in command of the police station and the Nazir of the Missiriya sitting under a tree in front of the police station... . All the inhabitants of Babanusa refused to assist in putting out the fire... . There was no way out except to let the fire complete its mission. Seventy-two Southerners were burnt to death... .

The police station was equipped with seventeen trained men who were armed with rifles, and had four tear gas bombs at their disposal. The fact

that they did not apply the tear gas facility against the attackers raises many questions.¹⁸

It is no exaggeration to say that the long legacy of relatively cordial relations between the Homr and the Ngok was dangerously immersed in the North-South conflict, which went far beyond right and wrong.

[N]ot only did an armed police unit give de facto approval for a group of “women and children” to burn to death a group of defenseless southerners; but also the entire town of Babanusa apparently engineered a conspiracy of incredible magnitude; leaving the genocide to the so-called “women and children.” This crime clearly testified that in that particular situation, it mattered not whether any particular victim was from Ngok or any other Nilotic group. The fact of being a southerner, who happened to be among that group, was sufficient cause for him/her to be burnt to death. It was even more saddening that the whole town refused to help in digging the graves for the dead... . [S]ince the “Dinka-on-fire” were southerners, who could have otherwise been fighting on the sides of the Anya-Nya forces, let them meet their fate”¹⁹

Deng Majok was now back in his area and, as expected, loyal to law and order. Although he was demonstratively outraged, he cooperated with the authorities to restore peace. Ibrahim Muhammad Zein recalled the predicament that then confronted Deng Majok, torn between loyalty to his people and a sense of duty toward promoting law and order in cooperation with the government. “Despite his clear stand with us [the North] ... things deteriorated ... between the Dinka and the Arabs... . [H]e worked very hard to restore law and order. A delegation went from here (Khartoum) comprising Rasheed El Tahir [Minister of Justice] and Ahmed Jubara El Awad [of the Interior]. They went and held a very large meeting among the tribal leaders in order to reach a peace settlement. There was of course bitterness in the speeches, but the end-result was commitment to the unity of the country and a reaffirmation of his leaning towards the North. His attitude had a considerable effect on the restoration of peace and stability. The result was a recognition of strong bonds between the Dinka and the Arabs”²⁰

The peace conference that would reconcile the two parties was convened later. Before the conference, Tigani Muhammad Zein witnessed Deng Majok's depressed mood.

The deterioration was immense. Muhktar El Tayeb [the District Commissioner] happened to be on a trip to see the elections there. So,

we joined him. Then we left on our way back. I believe the time was about 5:30 in the morning. Muhktar El Tayeb ... said, "Let us pass by Deng Majok's house! Let us see whether he is up or not." We went and found him awake and sitting in his court

house ... with ... tribal elders and ... Abdullahi Dugul from the Arabs ... Mukhtar El Tayeb greeted him and said, "Chief Deng, I am now leaving. I came to see the situation and must now go to report to the Governor. I thought I should stop to bid you farewell!

He said, I would like you to take a message to the governor. Please tell him that I say, 'Here we are afflicted with a problem that has burned down a large number of villages. Many people have left for the Northern towns. There is no grain and there are no homes to live in. We want him to let us know whether we should build on our old spots or in new areas. And tell him that whether we build our homes to the south or the north of the River Kir, we will still remain in Kordofan; whatever the number of death or the burning of villages, we are in Kordofan and nobody is going to force us out of Kordofan.' Just tell the Governor that"²¹

At the peace conference held at Abyei in early March 1965, Deng Majok maintained his firm identification with Kordofan and therefore with the North rather than with the South. According to the district reports, "[He] reiterated his Northernliness and his Kurdufan identity. He ... denied any association with the insurgency in the South. He reaffirmed his cleanliness of heart toward the Missiriya. He mentioned that he was absent at the outbreak of hostilities; that the Dinka ceased fighting after his arrival and the arrival of army troops, whereas the Missiriya continued the killing and the burning and destruction of property. He also referred to the massacres at Babanusa, and the embarrassing situation he had been put in, in front of his following"²² By then Deng Majok's sympathy for the rebel movement and the southern cause in general was relatively established and known. His unequivocal claim to be a northerner must therefore be understood as a shrewd political tactic, which Babo sought to expose at the conference.

Babo Nimir responded to Deng Majok by placing the responsibility on the Ngok and specifically on Deng Majok because of the attacks on the Missiriya in Ngokland, the failure to expel southern tribes from the area, and the involvement of Deng Majok's son in the southern insurgency. After long deliberations, with ajaweed, prominent tribal leaders acting as

mediators, a peace agreement was eventually concluded. The agreement called for the termination of acts of violence; restriction on the display of arms; guarantee of the safety of members

of each group in the territory of the other; return of all property captured during fighting; preparation of an inventory of persons and property lost during the hostilities; the administration of oath taking by each group according to its beliefs, the Muslims on the Koran and the Dinka on the sacred spears; and cooperation with the local authorities in maintaining peace and security.²³

Generally the Ngok remember the Arab mediators as having been fair and just. As preeminent leaders of tribes, they had their own indigenous standards for judging, which apparently stood apart from the neat North-South dichotomy. For those leaders, the fact that Deng Majok, a Dinka, identified himself with the North bridged the North-South cleavage. In any case, some of those leaders saw the aggressive profile of the Missiriya in a broader framework of intertribal conflicts in the region as a whole. According to Ngok sources, Moneim Mansour, the chairman of the mediation conference, said to Babo, "Babo, how can you alone dispute the land with the Rezeigat [in Darfur] and with the Hamar [in Western Kordofan] and with the Nuba [in Southern Kordofan] and go to that ... distant land of Deng Kwol and even as far as Paan Aruw? What kind of behavior is that?"²⁴

As indicated above, Deng Majok's absolute consistency and therefore credibility on the issue of his loyalty to northern identity in the North-South cleavage, while winning to the Arabs, was far more complex than they realized. He fully identified with the southern cause but chose to play his role in the most constructive way he knew and was within his control. Deng Majok wanted to avoid identifying the central government with the Homr Arabs. He felt that it was essential to the Dinka cause to force the central government into the moral position of a third-party judge or mediator, even though in fact he realized that the shared Arab identity of the Homr and the central government favored the Arabs. It was a case of upholding virtue to moderate evil; to foster objective judgement that could only work in favor of the Dinka. There is every reason therefore to believe that Deng Majok emphasized his identification with the North as a means of winning some favor from the central government and therefore ensuring a degree of justice against the Homr, but it was obvious to him

in any case that the government would not have allowed his joining the South. Nor was there much to look to in the South in the conditions that prevailed after the devastation wrought by the civil war.²⁵

At the peace conference, the Arabs claimed that the fertile northeast

area of Ngokland known as Ngol was theirs. In the words of Abd al-Basit Saeed, "Nazir Babo Nimir ... claimed that it was his father, Nazir Nimir Ali Al Gulla who ... permitted the Ngok in 1939 to move even further north into a place known as Ragaba Zarga [The Black River Neck]"²⁶ To the Dinka, that he could fabricate such a claim was the epitome of Arab unscrupulousness. In a way, it ironically proved the point Chief Kwol Arob had emphasized in his arguments for remaining in the North, that if he identified with the South, the Arabs, instead of appreciating his generosity in allowing them to graze and water their cattle in Ngokland, could claim the land to be theirs. With the North-South hostilities reflected in Ngok-Homr relations, the calculated ambitions of the Arabs over Ngok territory were already manifesting themselves. But, as Chol Adija recollected, Babo was criticized by the conference. Among the things Moneim Mansour, the chairman of the conference, is remembered to have said to Babo was, "Why are you after a soil as dark as the Dinka? What do you want from the dark soil of the Dinka? ... You are a people who simply go after grazing areas in the three months of the dry season. How can a person of three months' residence dispute the land with the settlers of all seasons?" Babo was found to be in the wrong.²⁷

Despite Deng Majok's fierce defense of his people and their land, the Arabs realized that only he among the Dinka could represent the interests of both sides, especially during such times of racial animosity. Ibrahim Muhammad Zein reports more evidence from his conversation with the district commissioner as they left Abyei early in the morning during the heat of the conflict. They had just stopped to see Deng Majok in his house, and he had assured the district commissioner of his continued loyalty to Kordofan: "We met Arabs on the way. Muhktar El Tayeb talked to them, advising them that they and the Dinka were one people and that they should not fight any more. He said to them, 'Here I am leaving, what I want to tell you and ask you to tell every Arab who might not understand the situation well, is that Deng Majok is the only person who binds the South and the North together. If we lose Deng Majok, it means that we will have lost this vital link and things will happen that only God knows.'"²⁸

Only days after the conclusion of the peace conference, the Ngok Dinka filed a complaint alleging Arab violation of the terms of the agreement. The Dinka retaliated with violence against Arab aggression, and a series of incidents ensued. In one instance, a group of

Dinka going to report to the police station were attacked by a group of Arabs. "The Dinka took refuge at a nearby army truck. They handed over their spears to the soldiers, in compliance with the latter's order, and demanded protection from their approaching assailants. The presence of the armed soldiers, who were also northerners, did not deter the Missiriya. A situation similar to the cold blooded murder of unarmed Dinka at Babanusa took place. The Missiriya attacked the unarmed Dinka and murdered them, whether outside or inside the army truck. They also fired at and punctured the tires of the truck. The soldiers did not fire at the invading Missiriya claiming that the master sergeant in command did not give such orders"²⁹

As Abd al-Basit Saeed observed, "The circumstances of this incident of genocide confirmed to the Dinka any doubts they might have had about the neutral stance of government troops. It provided the Dinka with sufficient reason to believe that the position that had been taken by the police during the Babanusa genocide was supportive of the Missiriya Arabs against them ... nor were ... [soldiers on the scene] charged with complicity"³⁰

The Ngok, having now lost faith in the prospects for peaceful coexistence with the Missiriya and in the justice of the district's administration, "demanded that a separate rural council seated at Abyei should be established for them, or that they may be annexed to the southern Nuba Mountains Rural Council seated at Kadugli. The Ngok argued that they could no longer remain with the Missiriya as subjects of the same administrative unit, since they could no longer reconcile their deep-seated differences. They demanded that all Missiriya policemen stationed at Abyei be transferred immediately"³¹ Abd al-Basit Saeed observed that "the Ngok did not demand disassociation from Kordofan Province as a whole," a position which he regarded as "consistent with Nazir Deng Majok's argument of deposition of all allegiance to northern Sudan, and with disassociating himself from any affiliation with the revolution in the South"³² He went on to acknowledge that "after the resolution of the civil war in 1972, and subsequent to [Deng] Majok's death, the tendency towards accession to the Southern Region gained

ground and became the center of differences among the Ngok themselves at the local level, and between Ngok and provincial administration”³³

As the South-North war intensified and extended into his area, Deng Majok became increasingly vexed about the fate of his border area.

Many believe that his vexation contributed to his ill health and eventual death in August 1969, an unparalleled calamity for the Ngok and other Dinkas farther South and indeed for the Arabs of Southern Kordofan, too.

When the news of Deng Majoks death reached Twichland, according to Atem Muoter: "One felt that the world was destroyed. And that is what it is: the world is not only spoiled; it will continue to be spoiled. Nobody seems to be able to bring it back under control. If Deng Kwol were alive, he would have checked the Baggara Arabs... . Deng would tear the Arabs apart with his teeth. And indeed, we and the Arabs have always been cannibalistic with one another. People run away from a person when he is brave and strong or when he has some supernatural powers. The power of Deng Kwol was unique"³⁴

Babo, a man who had turned from being a very close friend into a political adversary, also saw disaster in the death of Deng Majok. "O God!' we thought. 'What a loss!' It was as though the link binding the Missiriya and the Dinka had been cut. Once Deng was dead, the door was open for the young men who had gone and studied in missionary schools in the South, men who did not have the spirit of Deng Majok. [We thought,] 'Now that Deng is dead, these men will find the freedom to unleash their aspirations. The area will certainly be in trouble.'"³⁵

Ibrahim Muhammad Zein, an educator from Khartoum, summed up widely shared sentiments when he said, "Deng Majok is a loss to the family he is a loss to the area of Abyei, he is a loss to the whole area of Dar Missiriya, he is a loss to Kordofan Province, and he is a loss to the Sudan. He was the guarantor of stability in the area; he was the hope for a stabilizing leadership. Once he was gone, the situation began to shake and shake until it fell apart"³⁶

As the problems in Abyei became progressively worse and assumed national dimensions, that sentiment was to be echoed over and over again, not only at all levels within the Sudan, but also abroad in the interested circles of the Middle East.³⁷

The experience of Deng Majok and his border people, the Ngok Dinka, in

The experience of Deng Majok and his border people, the Ngok Dinka, in the context of the North demonstrates clearly that racial, ethnic, cultural, and even religious diversities can be harmonized into functional unity given a satisfactory degree of mutual recognition, respect, and accommodation on equitable bases.

In retrospect it is clear that several factors combined to make much of the interaction between the Ngok Dinka and the Homr Arabs a suc-

cess. The leaders of the two groups were able to act in an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence and interrelationship established by the British. Also, the Ngok leaders, especially Deng Majok, saw Arab culture as a step forward in the march of civilization. Over time this attitude would probably have encouraged the Ngok to evolve eclectically and gradually along the Arab-Islamic path. This assimilation would not have been ethnic, but rather cultural and perhaps even religious, with the Dinka retaining significant aspects of their own identity. Their destiny might have been similar, though to a lesser degree, to that of the non-Arab tribes in the North.

The process was derailed by four major factors: the control of the central government by the northern Arab-Muslim elite, bent on Arabization and Islamization of the South; the intensification of the conflict resulting from southern resistance; the assumption of Ngok leadership by the educated Christian and southern-oriented Ngok youth; and the increasing nationalist aspirations of the South, which resulted from the first two factors. These considerations constitute the crisis at the North-South crossroads. But they make an even more important point about the nature of the relations between the Ngok Dinka and the Homr Arabs at the North-South border.

The cooperative ties that prevailed between the Dinka and the Arabs were largely a consequence of very personal diplomatic relations between their respective leaders. Relations thus remained narrowly focused at the top and did not significantly alter the deeply rooted attitudes of the masses of the people, which rested on historical hostilities, animosities, and mutual prejudices. Even these diplomatic relations rested mostly on the assumed superiority of the Arabs, which gave them more leverage than the Dinka with the political center in Khartoum. While the British maintained a degree of equilibrium between the Ngok and the Homr and their respective leaders, this equilibrium tilted decisively in favor of the Arabs and their leaders from independence onward. As the cordial relations between the leaders began to be adversely affected by the changing equations of power at the center, the narrow bonds that had tied the tribes together at the top began to erode,

until they eventually broke, forcing the tribes to fall back into their long-established racial and cultural identities with their respective compatriots to the North and the South.

Nevertheless, the individual tribal leaders were able to bring their people together in relative peace and cooperation, however precarious

the relations remained. The central government was a critical factor in the equation, and intertribal relations could be moderated despite deep-rooted historical animosities as long as the national system could moderate relations between the tribes on more or less equitable and sustainable bases. Clearly the degree to which the equations of equality were balanced and maintained depended on the intensity of the linkage with the central government institutions and the extent to which they were impartial in their regulation of the relations between the Dinka and the Arabs. For these reasons, the arrangements were fragile and vulnerable to changes in the leadership and in the Arab-African North-South relations at the local, provisional, and national levels. All of these elements are closely interconnected at the crossroads.

REALIGNMENT OF DIVISIVE IDENTITIES

As is evident in the accounts of elders about the leadership of Arob, Kwol, and Deng Majok, the Ngok have always challenged their aggressive Arab neighbors with the moral and administrative support of the central authority. Over the past two decades, for the first time in their history, the Ngok have found the central government supportive of their neighbors against the Dinka. Even Deng Majok realized this after independence, and particularly toward the latter part of his life. From the time this shift became evident, soon after independence, the aspirations of the Ngok Dinka, and especially the educated class, began to turn southward.

The immediate concern of the educated Ngok, most of whom had attended schools in the South, was to determine the future of the area — specifically, whether it would remain in the North or join the South. The colonial government gave the Ngok five years within which they could reverse their decision to remain in the North. A conference was held in December 1955 under the guidance of Ahmed Deng, the oldest son of the chief, who had been appointed assistant executive officer and stationed in Ngokland. Ahmed's appointment by the British had disappointed the Homr, who construed it as favoritism for the Dinka. By the time of the conference Ahmed, who had attended Hantoub secondary school, where he had been an active Muslim Brother, was changing his

attitude toward the northerners and the Islamic faith.

He and the other northern-educated Muslim Dinka participated in the unanimous decision to persuade the Ngok to reconsider their earlier decision in favor of remaining under the administration of Kordofan. The new trend was to join the South. This was deemed important in the light of possible federation for the South. Representatives were sent to chiefs and elders to persuade them to agree. Chief Deng Majok, the subtribal chiefs, the sectional chiefs, the clan heads, and all other notable elders accepted the suggestion of the conference and were in turn asked to consult with their own people. It was apparent that the Ngok had changed their minds about remaining in Kordofan.

The question now was how to tell the central government. Repercussions were to be expected. Suppression of the idea by the government was probable. A delegation composed of Osman Koc Aguer, a Muslim convert who was educated in the North, and Justin Deng Biong, a Christian convert who was educated in the South, was dispatched to convey the decision to the governor of the province through the commissioner of the Dar Missiriya district, a northern Sudanese. News of the decision had already reached the province headquarters and had become a matter of grave concern for the northerners. The newspaper Kordofan published an editorial in which it attacked the Ngok proposal as a separatist step likely to jeopardize the unity of the country at large and advocated measures against the proponents of the dangerous move. When the members of the Ngok delegation reached the district headquarters and met with the district commissioner, they were arrested. Later they were released on the request of Chief Deng Majok, who had concealed his support for the move and continued on good terms with the authorities, confining his grievances to the Homr.

The fact that the Ngok were affiliated with the Missiriya tribes in a council that bore the name of the other tribes and in which they were a minority meant placing them under a local government that was Arab-dominated. The council had jurisdiction in all the affairs of local government and tended to favor the Homr in subtle ways. The grievances of the Ngok were intensified by the fact that the Umma party, the party of Babo's relatives-in-law, was in power, and this fact reinforced the perception of

favoritism.

An example of central government bias for the Arabs occurred in 1958 when the second parliamentary elections were held. The Umma government had gerrymandered the Ngok Dinka into two constituencies — both of which gave the Humr a majority. At first the Ngok chiefs

and elders decided to boycott the elections, but Chief Deng Majok, having been persuaded by the central government to cooperate, influenced his subordinate chiefs to participate. As expected, the two Dinka candidates, a son and a nephew of the chief, lost. Worse, while Ali Nimr, a Homr chief, won as a representative, his brother was elected to the upper chamber, and his son, a secondary-school student, was appointed chief in his father's place.

For the Ngok Dinka in general, the problem was increasingly assuming a South-North dimension. This became most evident during the transitional period of the October 1964 revolution. Early in February 1965 the Ngok refused to join the forthcoming national elections unless the southern provinces entered the elections. The Ngok also went further to demand once more that they be disaffiliated from Kordofan and joined to the administration of Bahr al-Ghazal in the South. The internal conflict worsened until it exploded into the 1965 clashes, which came to be known as among the worst in South-North hostilities.³⁸ Many Ngok young people, including some members of the leading families, joined the Anya-Nya, and some of them became prominent officers in the southern forces. The conflict was no longer Ngok versus Homr, but southerners versus northerners, and the Ngok became more identified with the South.

CHANGE OF LOCAL LEADERSHIP

With the death of Deng Majok in 1969, tribal power passed on to younger generations who were politicized toward identification with the southern cause, irrespective of whether they had been educated in the North or the South and whether they were Muslims or Christians. But history was to repeat itself over the issue of succession to Deng Majok, with the divisions within the family reflecting similarities to those following the death of Chief Kwol Arob and the conflict between Deng Majok and Deng Abot. Given the prevailing Ngok-Homr, North-South conflict, the problems arising over the succession to Deng Majok were particularly acute, with devastating consequences for the tribe, the relations with the Arabs, and the overall linkage to the North-South conflict.

Deng Majok's absence from the tribe on account of the illness from which

he eventually died in Cairo had resulted in a reign of terror,

characterized by arrests, torture, and death at the hands of the security forces. Two of Deng Majok's nephews, Justin Deng Biong and Osman Koc Aguer, were the local rebel leaders. This fueled the suspicions of the security forces against the family's leadership position with the government. The chief's family was not immune to the violence; his half-brother Anyal Kwol was shot by the security forces, and Deng Majok's own sister, Awor, the mother of the rebel leader Osman Koc Aguer, was tortured. The Dinka, including their chiefs and especially their educated people, were under careful scrutiny and lived in constant apprehension.

Abdalla Monyyak Deng, a junior son of the first wife, a northern-educated Muslim whom his father had left in charge and who was to succeed him, had tried to fill his father's position; but he had neither the legal authority nor as yet the personal influence to be effective. He was even suspected by the security forces of cooperation with the rebels. He was challenged by Adam Kwol Deng, the first son of the second wife, also a convert to Islam, who was favored by the northern security forces because he supported his father's policy of remaining with the North.

Abdalla was chosen by the family to succeed Deng Majok, and eventually the central government invested him with administrative and judicial powers. His position, however, was fraught with difficulties, which grew with the continued friction between the Ngok and the central security forces. A public confrontation over the murder of four Dinka men and the confiscation of their cattle by the security forces ended with the chief of security's threatening Abdalla's life. Less than a month later, on September 17, 1970, Abdalla and two of his brothers and three of their uncles were strolling near the village when they were attacked by a group of gunmen and shot to death. Eyewitnesses identified the assassins as the commanding officer of the security forces and six of his men. The official report of the officer to the province headquarters and to Khartoum was that they had been killed by the rebels.³⁹ Under the title "How Six Sudanese Died: A Family Massacre," Michael Wolfers wrote of these murders in the Times of London, October 19, 1970:

Joseph Garang, the Minister in the Sudanese revolutionary government

responsible for Southern Sudan, has just announced a year's extension of the amnesty for southerners who have been

engaged in secessionist activity but wish to return to their own country ... It requires a considerable act of confidence and faith for a southerner to return to territory still garrisoned and administered by northern troops and officials.

The growth of their confidence may be seriously damaged by ... the recent killing of six members of one of the leading Dinka families ... including the paramount chief of the Ngok Dinka. The critical point about these events is that they take place in a family which has traditionally favoured cooperation between north and south, and at Abyei in Kordofan Province, not on the southern borders of the country but in the borderland between northerners and southerners... .

The Ngok Dinka, believing in the good faith of the Sudanese central government, look to the northern administrators in the provincial capital for protection of law and order... . Their initial hopes for the new government which took power nearly 18 months ago are now tinged with skepticism.

The appointment of Adam by the security forces to succeed as chief, along with his known ambition for the position, raised suspicion of some involvement on his part in the conspiracy to assassinate his brothers. This suspicion was later reinforced by the attitude Adam displayed toward the committee that the government established to investigate the assassinations. Although the evidence was presented in secret, it was commonly believed that he had testified in favor of the security forces. Since the testimony was given under oath sworn upon the Sacred Spears, those who swore to opposing positions were considered according to Dinka religious practice to be engaged in a blood feud and had to sever all ties, not eat or drink in each other's homes, and, to all intents and purposes, regard themselves as enemies. Adam was thus severed from the family and isolated. Even his own brothers, Ali (Monylam) and Osman (Mijak), stood with the family against him. Attempts to reunify the family proved futile and had to be shelved until a more opportune time.

A year and a half after the Abyei massacre, Nimeiri's government concluded the Addis Ababa Agreement with the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM). The status of Abyei had been discussed but left unresolved. The South claimed Abyei, and the North maintained

a strong hold on the status quo. Ultimately the point was shelved on the inclusion of a clause to put the issue to the Ngok themselves through a referendum. The agreement defines the South as including the southern provinces and other areas as may be determined by a referendum to be culturally and geographically part of the southern complex.⁴⁰ With the remarkable success of the agreement in bringing the civil war to an end, the authorities did not seem eager to raise such divisive issues as where Abyei belonged. There was therefore a tendency to postpone the issue, if not to disregard it.

Meanwhile the Ngok, having identified themselves and become identified with the South during the civil war, and nursing bitterness because of dreadful experiences at the hands of northerners, began to agitate for joining the South. The educated were particularly vocal on the point. To make things worse, the Ngok were not provided with the repatriation, resettlement, and rehabilitation services given to the postwar South, even though the area had also been devastated by war. In their bitterness, they accused the South of having sacrificed them. Bulabek Malith articulated the sentiment of the Ngok thus: "We fought together... . [The Arabs] burned down all our villages, including cattle-bytes... . Even grain, they burned... . [T]hey did that ... because they ... knew we had joined our people. But when the settlement was reached, it was as though the people of Abyei were sacrificed for peace... . We had had people die in the forest; we had had people die at home while we were supposed to be in the North... . What makes us remain in the North?"⁴¹

The strategy of the Arabs was to claim Ngokland as part of Kordofan, the implication being that if people wanted to join the South, they had to move physically and leave the land. Since other Dinka areas at one time affiliated with Kordofan had subsequently severed their connection and affiliated with the South, such claim of land ownership could not be justified on purely administrative grounds. The authorities therefore revised the history of occupation of the land to give the Homr Arabs prior claim to ownership, even though historical evidence abundantly contradicted their claim. Recent Arab sources, including provincial reports, assert that the Arabs predated the Dinka as settlers, not only in

the present-day Arab areas, but in the heartland of Ngok territory. This tendency is clearly new and has been favored by the rise of pro-South nationalism among the Ngok and by the Arabs' fear that their seasonal access to the land in search of pastures and water would

be hampered if Ngokland were affiliated with the South. This is precisely why their claims to the land are now being made without any attention to objective facts. Abd al-Basit, for instance, wrote: "The Humur ... believe that it was Nazir Ali Al Gulla of the Humur (appointed in 1905) who first permitted the Ngok — at the request of Nazir Arob Biong ... to cross Khor Abu Nafiesa to the North and settle at a place later to be named Sultan Arob"⁴² He also refers to Babo's claim made at the peace conference in March 1966 that "it was his father, Nazir Nimir Ali Al Gulla who ... permitted the Ngok in 1939 to move even further north into a place known as Ragaba Zarga"⁴³ He does not, however, register the response of either the Dinka themselves or the arbitrators, presumably because they were omitted from the official district records.

The reaction of the Baggara Arabs and the authorities of Kordofan to the Ngok demand to join the South demonstrates that the fears of the Ngok leaders that their hospitality to the Arabs would be reversed to turn them into guests was justified. Joining the South had become the equivalent of the southern call for federation in the 1950s and 1960s, which was seen as synonymous with separation and had to be suppressed in the same way the southern movement had been suppressed. Although killing had stopped under the Addis Ababa Agreement, the methods used in fighting this alleged separatism were quite similar to those prevailing in the South during the southern struggle for recognition. Educated Ngok were exiled or subjected to annoyance or provocation. In the words of Marieu Ajak: "The educated had already been picked and sent away. Each [one] would come and it would be said, 'this boy can read; send him away... . If you leave him here, he will be able to read what is in the books and he will understand the accusations. Let all the educated be moved!' That was why all our boys were sent away. Only we, the ignorant, remained. And the ... [opportunists] became the educated because they spoke Arabic"⁴⁴ The Ngok Dinka were confronted with a dilemma not much different from the one faced by the South: should they press for joining the South, which was clearly not going to be allowed, or should they seek alternatives within the North? Just as the South was compelled to modify separatist aspirations to a call for a federal arrangement and eventually accepted regional autonomy, some among the Ngok Dinka began to

advocate microautonomy within the framework of Kordofan as a more practical alternative.

THE QUEST FOR AUTONOMY

Government suppression of the Ngok desire to join the South directly interfered with the system of local autonomy which had given Ngok local leaders a privileged position in comparison with their counterparts in both the North and the South. With this privileged position gone, being in the North was perceived as an anomaly that imposed considerable disadvantages on the Ngok Dinka. This in turn intensified their active political move to disaffiliate themselves from the North. But the more they acted in that direction, through pressures on both the regional and the central governments, the more they were repressed by the local authorities in Kordofan and the more the confrontation and the conflict escalated. In this respect the southern regional government was powerless.

In the middle of this confusion and apprehension for the future, the central government adopted a policy designed to offer an alternative approach to the Abyei situation.⁴⁵ The strategy behind the policy was to build on the achieved peace and unity in South-North relations rather than place Abyei in the negative position of a disputed territory. It used the experience of reversing the southern demand for separatism into a celebration of unity and combined it with the historical role of the Ngok Dinka as an autonomous bridge between the North and the South, suggesting that introducing a micro form of autonomy to the area with a special program of accelerated development could reverse the separatist tide and consolidate its historical role in fostering the unity and integration of the country.

Meanwhile, the repression of Abyei by the security forces approximated the conditions of the South before the Addis Ababa Agreement. The search for an alternative approach to the situation became imperative. The new policy was based on the recommendations of a special report, "A Proposed Plan for the Development of Abyei as a Model for National Integration," submitted to the government several months after the Addis Ababa Agreement.⁴⁶

The report began with an assessment of the autonomy solution to the

southern problem and its long-term implications for the unity and integration of the country. It stated: "There is still an unresolved fear on the part of some Sudanese that autonomy is a degree of separation and may be a step in the direction of greater separation... . Quite the contrary, ... autonomy is a safety-valve which guarantees harmonious

interaction between citizens in their process towards national integration”

The report recognized that the people of Abyei still felt oppressed by the local administrators and members of the security forces. They also felt that they were being ignored and that the effects of the suffering they had endured during the civil war were not being addressed. The report also pointed out that the people of Abyei were being left out of the development schemes aimed at the South. In their present position they were not able to play their traditional bridging role and were condemned to backwardness and underdevelopment.

The solutions were based on the assumption that it was necessary for Abyei people to feel that they had a share in their local power rather than remain dominated by what they conceived as an outsider; that they received equal attention for relief, resettlement, and rehabilitation; and that they were not left behind on the path of development. The report concluded:

Abyei has always been a model of Sudanese national unity even though this fact is little known... . [Ngok Dinka's] past identification with their Northern compatriots [was] founded on mutual respect, an equitable control over their own local power, and their realization of common interests in their wider association with their Northern neighbours. With the granting of autonomy to the South, with the implementation of relief, resettlement and rehabilitation measures, and with prospects for extensive social and economic development, the South now feels a sense of solidarity with the North as it has never felt before. Abyei needs something similar on a much smaller scale... . Abyei should be made a model of guided ... change towards the long-term goal of cross-cultural diffusion and national integration.⁴⁷

The proposal was formally endorsed as government policy. In December 1972, President Nimeiri went to Abyei to announce the policy. But a delegation of the Ngok Dinka confronted him with the demand to join the South. Their spokesman, Ring Arob, a nephew of Deng Majok, using an impressive command of Arabic, articulated the differences between the

Ngok Dinka and the northerners and the similarities between the Ngok Dinka and the South. Apparently, the tone was so offensive that the president was outraged, declared that he had not come to Abyei to divide the country, rejected the hospitality of the

people, and decided to hold back some of the things he had planned to do for the area. But he was eventually persuaded to be magnanimous. He agreed to accept their hospitality, and he promised autonomous status for Kordofan. He also promised that the central government would take a special interest in the development of the area.

Nimeiri was also confronted with complaints against Chief Adam Deng, whom he immediately deposed. In conformity with what the government had done in the North, though not in the South, he declared the institution of chieftainship abolished, a dramatic step that shocked the Dinka and was to have profound repercussions for their local situation.

The educated Ngok, whose nationalist sentiments toward the South were at their peak, felt that the policy of autonomous development within Kordofan was a capitulation, a betrayal of the cause of joining the South. They also perceived the promised development as an attempt to buy their freedom and the right of self-determination.

Kordofan authorities and the Arabs, however, separated the idea of autonomy for Abyei from the notion of the area's being given a special status as a symbol of national unity. They attributed the first to the influence of Ngok nationalism at the center and opposed it as separatist, anti-Arab, and pro-South. They credited the president and his minister of local government for the second and interpreted it as a declaration that the Abyei area was a common ground for the Arabs and the Dinka to interact and mutually assimilate into a model for national unity and integration. This interpretation meant that the central government had not only ruled out the call of the Ngok to join the South, but had indeed given the Arabs rights over Ngokland on equal footing with the Dinka.

The commissioner of Southern Kordofan, Mahmoud Hasib, in a statement in which he claimed that the Abyei area was Kordofan territory, said, "It is for this reason that Abyei has been thought of as an ideal nucleus for peaceful coexistence, and as a meeting ground where tribal hostilities and racial prejudice may be destroyed, through continuous interaction in pasture grass lands and by transactional activities in

marketplaces, so that our animal wealth may be preserved from extinction”⁴⁸

In a letter to the president of the republic refuting allegations that the province authorities were obstructing the implementation of the policy of autonomy and development in the Abyei area, the commis

sioner stated that the president had instructed "that Abyei District must be transformed into an example of a melting pot where the Dinka and Arab tribes lead a homogeneous existence; and that it should be made an exemplary case for homogeneity and interaction between North and South"⁴⁹

With this misrepresentation and manipulation of the policy the Ngok Dinka felt as though they had suffered double jeopardy: first to have imposed on them a policy that compromised their goal of joining the South; and then to have that compromise solution misconstrued, not only to deny them the little that was promised by the policy but to open the doors of their land to the Arabs on equal footing with the Dinka.

Furthermore, although the family and the bulk of the tribe had opposed Adam as a chief, they had not intended their opposition to result in the abolition of chieftainship. What was worse, the vacuum created by the abolition of chieftaincy was filled by a handful of the people who had opposed the traditional leadership of the Pajok lineage, and indeed, the institution of chieftainship itself. Although these people had new positions with new titles, they saw themselves in traditional terms, as chiefs. For the average Ngok, this meant a double threat: the disappearance of their protection and the introduction of a hostile substitute.

The Ngok continued to look for leadership in the sons of Deng Majok, whose dedication to the welfare of their people had become a sacred duty with deep historical roots. David Cole and Richard Huntington, leaders of a development team from Harvard University, observed that "all of them, for whatever comfort and prestige their education has granted, remain passionately committed to the welfare of the Ngok people although they often disagree fundamentally among themselves about the best political course for the tribe. Additionally, they are competitive among themselves since there are always more qualified sons of Deng Majok than there are opportunities for scholarships, offices, or notoriety"⁵⁰

The sons of Deng Majok were perceived by the people as committed to

the public good. Whether or not they held public office, they continued to shoulder the moral obligation and burden of serving their people under most trying circumstances. In contrast, those individuals who were favored by the Arabs were seen as opportunistic tools of external oppression, lacking the fundamental moral principles of lead-

ership. Although some of them were descendants of the Dhiendior clan or lineage of the Mannyuar subtribe and had competing historical claims to leadership, they were viewed as primarily driven by personal ambitions for power without legitimacy. The result was that those who had been placed in repressive positions of power, far from being effective, proved to be a source of instability and a symbol of the ineffectiveness of the government at the local level.

While the authorities of Kordofan did not wholeheartedly welcome the policy of autonomous development of Abyei, remaining suspicious of what they saw as its hidden separatist agenda, the principle of developing Abyei as a model of national unity, coexistence, and integration was finding serious favor in the central government circles. It was incorporated into the government's Program of Action, and according to the minister of local government, Jaafar Muhammad Ali Bekheit, became one of the most important projects of the ministry.

A national committee, comprising cabinet ministers of such key central ministries as planning, finance, agriculture, health, education, transportation and communication, public administration, and of course, local government, was constituted under the chairmanship of the minister of local government to formulate a project of integrated rural development in the area and to supervise its implementation. A team of nine local government officers, one for every subtribe, was posted to the area under the leadership of an assistant provincial commissioner, a senior administrator by the name of Abdal-Rahman Salman.

Under Salman and his team, Abyei seemed to prosper for a while. The officers, competing among themselves and also building on the competitiveness among the subtribes, were able to increase agricultural productivity and mobilize the people for self-help construction work on school facilities.

However, a central idea in the plan of autonomy was that the educated sons and daughters of the Ngok Dinka should be involved in the administration and development of their own area. The minister of local

government was persuaded that the head of the administration in the area and at least a number of the junior administrators should be from the Ngok Dinka. Jaafar Muhammad Ali Bekheit conceded the point, and Justin Deng Aguer, the brother of Osman Koc Aguer, who had been a coleader of the local rebels in the 1960s, was appointed assistant commissioner to head the administration of the area. Justin

Deng had studied law and economics in France after years of government service as an accountant. He undertook the task with a deep sense of obligation and patriotic zeal. Although he personally favored the Ngok's joining the South, he accepted, with a loyalty the Arabs could never understand, far less trust, the responsibility of managing the policy of developing Abyei as a bridge. He was particularly successful in giving the Dinka a sense of identity and cultural pride that had been lacking in the modern context. For the same reasons that he became popular with the Dinka, Justin Deng was viewed with suspicion by the Arabs, who saw what they called the "southernization" of the administration in Abyei as an anti-North turn of events that was bound to work against their interest. Worse, many confused Deng's name with that of his cousin, Justin Deng Biong, who had been a rebel leader, and some knew that the other rebel leader, Osman Koc Aguer, who had by then been killed in action, was Justin Deng's brother. The pro-Arab security informants among the Dinka also saw in Justin a threat to their position. Their fear was aggravated when Justin, believing in straightforwardness and administrative firmness but lacking tact, confronted them soon after his arrival, calling them opportunists who had enriched themselves at the expense of their own people and warning them that their days had ended when he assumed power in the tribe. From that moment on, they were firmly opposed to him and everything he represented, and they did what they could to undermine his authority. These developments were compounded by the provincial authorities' resentment of Justin Deng's appointment by Khartoum and his close connections with central government circles, which they viewed as undercutting provincial authority.

A complex situation was created in which the idea of Ngok autonomy and development was supported by the central government but covertly opposed by the provincial authorities and the local Arabs. These groups worked to undermine and discredit Justin Deng. The result was that, while Justin was successful in raising morale and confidence among the Dinka, the support that Abdal-Rahman Salman and his development team, all now withdrawn, had received from the authorities diminished.

Although the appointment of Justin Deng alleviated the insecurity

resulting from the abolition of tribal leadership, Ngok Dinka elders continued to plead with the government to restore their chieftainship and to appoint one of Deng Majok's sons in his father's place. Eventually Jaafar Muhammad Ali Bekheit, the minister of local government,

recognized the need for reversing government policy and appointing a chief from among the sons of Deng Majok, providing they united the family and the tribe. This essentially meant ending the family feud with Adam that had resulted from the assassination of Chief Abdalla and his five relatives.

Days of intensive negotiation within the family and at the tribal level succeeded in reconciling all the major conflicting parties. Salah Ahmed Bukhari, the governor of Kordofan who had helped mediate the dispute, also announced a plan for a new judicial hierarchy, headed by a court of appeal with a permanent president, a position which, according to the unanimous decision of the council of the subtribal chiefs, was to go to one of the sons of Deng Majok. The choice eventually fell on Kwol Adol, a young man in his early twenties.

Kwol Adol soon proved popular with the Ngok Dinka and measured up to the challenge of leadership under rapidly changing conditions. Although he had only an intermediate-level education, he was very intelligent, proficient in both Arabic and English, dynamic, but admirably humble in a way that sharply contrasted with his father, whose power had kept the Ngok in awe. Kwol was a Muslim, though he never changed his Dinka name to be Arab-Islamic. He shared the political aspiration of the people for joining the South, but, like Justin Deng, was loyal to the alternative policy of developing Abyei as a special border area. Kwol, like virtually all Ngok Dinka, was absolutely opposed to Arab domination, which he fought with youthful vigilance, fringing on recklessness. With experience and counseling, he eventually developed a more prudent approach toward his internal opponents and the Arab adversaries, both government officials and tribesmen. On the whole, the predominant theme in the relations between the Dinka and the Arabs was turbulence, which increased his popularity with the Dinka but made cooperation with the Arabs and the Kordofan authorities exceedingly difficult.

The authorities of Kordofan continued to be suspicious and hostile toward the region. They put Kwol Adol, Justin Deng, and the family of Deng Majok as a whole, with the exception of the deposed Adam Deng, in the

same boat as separatists. Commissioner Mahmoud Hassib wrote:

With ex-Nazir Adam Deng — deposed as he has been since 1972 — within reach of the power scene but unable to steer it; and Deng Majok's family refusing to reconcile with the loss of power they

have been suffering from since the dissolution of native administration; they started to execute a carefully devised plan to recapture power to the exclusion of other Ngok sections, with the complicity of Gustin Deng as Assistant to the Commissioner for Abyei District. Gustin Deng liquidated and froze all activities of the two peoples' courts; merchants and non-Ngok residents were pressured to abandon their businesses and to leave Abyei... . Gustin Deng went all the way and constituted the type of court he wanted with the membership he desired. The court was constituted of Kwol Deng Majok as President, three other members from Deng Majok's family, and one merchant.⁵¹

To those familiar with the facts, all this sounds like fiction. Even more astonishing is the process by which Kwol Adol's appointment was distorted by the provincial authorities and turned into an act of deceit by Justin Deng, with the assistance of Deng Majok's sons. Abd al-Basit Saeed wrote:

The Assistant to the Commissioner at Al Fula mentioned in a July 1980 report that Gustin Deng, the assistant to the commissioner at Abyei in 1977 who was thought to be an ally of Deng Majok's family, actually deceived the central government in Khartoum with respect to the appointment of Kwol Deng Majok as president of Abyei People's Court. His account tells that the authorities had wanted ex-Nazir Adam Kwol Adol Deng to become the president of the court because he was Pro-northern Sudan and was following on the heels of the policy of friendly relations with the Arabs that the late Nazir Deng Majok had pursued. But Gustin Deng, in complicity with the more educated sons of Deng Majok were opposed to the installation of ex-Nazir Adam Kwol Adol Deng as president of the court. The account tells that Gustin Deng deceived the central government by making them believe that Kwol Deng was the same person also known as Kwol Adol Deng; and that Gustin ignored the Arab name Adam and the adjectival term "Adol" meaning "of lighter complexion" in Ngok language — which ex-Nazir Adam Kwol Adol Deng was. The authorities in Khartoum believed Gustin Deng's argument and approved the ap-

pointment of Kwol Deng thinking that it was the same person as Kwol Adol Deng.⁵²

It is particularly noteworthy that the report stressed the part of the name that alludes to Adam's color of skin, which, though correctly translated, does not in the Dinka context imply being closer to the Arab identity, which the report clearly implies.

Notwithstanding these distortions about the manner in which Kwol Adol had been selected, Ngok yearning for leadership, which goes very deep into their political and religious system, soon gave Kwol a prominent profile, which was augmented by the formal institutions of government, despite the adversarial relationship Kwol had with the authorities. As Abd al-Basit Saeed has explained,

District and provincial officials believed that the installation of Kwol Deng Majok as president of Abyei People's Court, "through the complicity of Gustin Deng," confirmed to the Ngok Dinka that the traditional power and authority that Deng Majok's family always enjoyed had not been dampened or drained despite provincial and State policies that had dissolved the system of Native Administration. In fact, under the new system of People's Local Government, Kwol Deng Majok was able to achieve leading positions in the several popular and bureaucratic organizations. He was: the president of Abyei People's Court; a member of the Provincial Secretariat of the SSU; an assistant to the Secretary General of the Union of Sudan Youth Organizations; a member of the Provincial People's Executive Council. As far as the Ngok Dinka were concerned, Kwol Deng Majok was their Nazir, Sultan, with administrative, political and spiritual powers of leadership, irrespective of the specific provincial administration which promoted him to such privileged position. This case shows that the dissolution of Native Administration as a measure of administrative reform and as a policy to break the power of dynastic ruling families created by indirect rule, was not always successful.⁵³

Toward the end of 1975, the Harvard Institute for International

Development (HIID) responded to a government request for technical assistance to the Abyei development program by sending a two-man team to Abyei in January 1976. The team prepared a report giving its preliminary view of the development plan. The report stressed the

physical isolation of the area, and hence the urgent need for action on transportation and communications; the complex administration with its cumbersome decisionmaking machinery, and the need for simplification, especially in budgeting, for fast and effective planning and implementation of development projects; and finally, the almost complete absence of basic information necessary to development.

The team considered the last point so essential to any plan of development that they recommended establishing a development research center in the area, to be jointly staffed by Harvard and counterparts in the Sudan. The Harvard contribution would be phased out over a period of time. The new center could conduct research and implement immediate projects to persuade the disillusioned people that the government was in earnest about its declared policy. The longer-term program would be confined to coordinating research with practical implementation. The team envisaged a strategy of development aimed at maximum use of the human resources available in the area and the contextualization of development to minimize social disruption and disintegration. The model was to be applicable to other parts of the Sudan, Africa, and, indeed, the developing world.

In his Independence Day speech in Kadugli, the headquarters of Southern Kordofan province, on January 1, 1977, President Nimeiri reiterated the government policy over the area, solemnly pledging his personal responsibility for the development of the Abyei area. Placing it in the context of the overall development of Southern Kordofan, President Nimeiri stated:

I would like development in this rich province to be an overall and integrated development. [I direct the Ministry of Finance, Planning and National Economy and the People's Executive Council of the Province to co-operate in the setting up of a comprehensive plan for the development of the province by promoting the traditional sector, indicating the contributions of the four economic sectors, and the share of the local development and self-help in this effort which we want to be an example to be emulated by all provinces.] If this is what we want for your province,

I want the area of Abyei — where the great Dinka and Missiriya tribes meet and co-exist — to be an example of the interaction of cultures. Abyei is to the Sudan exactly what the Sudan is to Africa. This project will be implemented under my personal supervision in

cooperation with all the institutions of the state, universities and international organizations.⁵⁴

Shortly after the president's statement, which spotlighted Abyei to the whole nation, the second Western development team arrived and was joined by a five-man team of Sudanese. After extensive travels and consultations in the area, the group prepared a detailed and comprehensive report focusing on five principal areas for improvement. These included increasing agricultural production to self-sufficiency and varying production for a better diet; increasing water supply for people and livestock during the dry season; improving communications by road and radio; expanding education from the limited, basic level to a level that would approach national standards and also meet local needs in relevance and cultural continuity; and extending health services to cover more fully the needs of the scattered rural population. The Harvard plan was formally adopted, and USAID became the principal funder.⁵⁵

The project, however, met with serious obstacles. Vocal elements of the educated Ngok youth, committed to Abyei's joining the South, saw it as a way of neutralizing the pro-South nationalist movement in the area. It was a clear case of politics overriding economics. Some of these differences reflected long-standing rivalries among various factions of the tribe, particularly between the Pajok and Dhiendior clans. Beyond the Dinka, the Arab tribes and Kordofan authorities saw it as favoritism to the people of Abyei and a circumvention of provincial authority by the center. They also saw any autonomy for Abyei, and in particular the appointment of Justin Deng, as a step toward ultimately severing the area from Kordofan and annexing it to the South. Through their political pressure and intimidation, often involving armed incursions, the Arabs forced the provincial authorities to transfer Ngok officials from Abyei, and some even from Kordofan. Justin Deng was among them. Abyei's autonomy was progressively undermined and diminished. As for the project, so entangled in political conflicts did it become that absurd allegations were made to the effect that the Dinka were receiving arms from abroad through HIID. As the problems and complexities of the situation mounted, it was only a matter of time before USAID terminated its funding and the

project was abandoned.

It is obvious from the foregoing that what has prevailed in the Ngok area is a continuation of a colonial-type external control and domina-

tion in which the Arabs, from local to provincial authorities, working in close alliance with the tribes that are racially and religiously identified with the authorities as Arabs and Muslims, have been the rulers, and the Dinka have been the subject people, governed through subjugation, divisive intrigues, and the repression of their will for freedom and autonomy. The policy of developing the area as a model of national unity and integration was part of a strategy aimed at reconciling the continued administration of Abyei as part of Kordofan with the yearning of the people for genuine freedom from external domination. But even this minimum was denied the Ngok Dinka and, as always with the oppressed, their own people were among those who betrayed them by intriguing with the Arabs for personal gain. But the identity lines were sharply drawn and ultimately insurmountable. As the singer Minyiel Row put it, referring to such men as chameleons, Even if you keep changing your positions, And you have not been fitted into the Arab skin, You will suffer disdain You are a Black man; You are suspect.

Invariably people who sought to improve their fortunes by identifying themselves with the oppressors would fall back into the Dinka camp, even more alienated from the Arabs than they had been. Among the young men and women from Abyei fighting in the SPLM-SPLA are sons, daughters, or relatives of people who had notoriously identified with the Arabs against their people's quest for freedom. And these young people know as they fight that they have the sympathy, indeed the approval, of the chameleon fathers and relatives, forced by the indignity of the situation to play that demeaning role. The SPLA songs — which called on the young men and women in the movement to rise, shoot, and kill the “coward” who has betrayed their dignity and to prove to them the existence of the African element in the Sudan — were composed by members of the Ngok Dinka and originally sung in classical Arabic. These songwriting warriors had been educated in the North, had been converted to Islam, and were proficient in Arabic. And yet they were nationalistically southern. Despite the religious and cultural veneer, these Ngok were decidedly linked to the South.

LINKAGE TO THE NORTH-SOUTH CONFLICT

Many southerners criticized the alternative policy on Abyei as the main obstacle to Abyei's joining the South. As a result, politicians, students, and concerned southerners engaged in a vigorous campaign against the policy and its proponents. For many, the failure of the Abyei project was a blessing in disguise.

The educated class among the Ngok, most of whom had moved to the South to seek employment, continued to agitate for joining the South. And their call was meeting with popular support. It was indeed the issue of Abyei that prompted Zachariah Bol Deng, a physician and one of the leading sons of Deng Majok, to join southern politics and, together with the Abyei intellectual community in the South, side with Joseph Lagu, who was challenging Abel Alier for the presidency of the southern regional government after his first term under the Addis Ababa Agreement. Lagu, who had led the Anya-Nya in the first war and had been absorbed as a general in the army, had become critical of Abel Alier as too soft on the North and was promising to be a stronger, more assertive, and confrontational leader for the South. He also promised to champion the cause of the people of Abyei by demanding from the central government that they be allowed to exercise the right to decide through a referendum under the terms of the Addis Ababa Agreement.

In addition to campaigning vigorously for Lagu, Zachariah Bol Deng ran for the Graduates' seat in the regional assembly, won, and was elected deputy speaker, not least because of the southern support for his political mission for Abyei in the South. After defeating Abel Alier for the presidency of the regional government, Lagu himself began to soften his line with the central government and retreat from his electoral promise to the people of Abyei once he realized the sensitivity of the issue and the need to assure the North of his commitment to national unity. As a result, the Ngok Dinka in the South, including Bol himself, transferred their support from Lagu to Alier. After Alier's next electoral victory, Bol became regional minister of health in his new cabinet. Bol was qualified for the position, but his appointment was also a gesture of sympathy and support for the Ngok.

Bol raised the issue of Abyei high on the agenda of regional debates and even succeeded in having a resolution passed calling for implementation of the pertinent provision of the Addis Ababa Agreement.

Soon, however, he too became aware of the formidable obstacles to Abyei's joining the South. The more the issue became a subject of discussion in the South, the more the repression against the people of Abyei intensified. The Arabs and the Kordofan authorities suspected the Dinka generally and preferred to cooperate only with those who advocated that Abyei remain in the North, whether from conviction or for personal gain. Even the strategy behind the policy of developing Abyei as a model of national unity and integration was perceived as a clever ploy to delude the authorities and foster a secret plan to sever Abyei from Kordofan and annex it to the South. Abd al-Basit Saeed substantiated this thesis from confidential reports of the assistant commissioner for the western district, but with an apparently sympathetic understanding of the reasons behind the Ngok desire to join the South:

Kwol Deng's appointment as president of Abyei people's court was the starting point for the careful execution of a secret plan aiming at the separation of Ngokland from southern Kurdufan and its subsequent annexation to the southern Region of the Sudan. The Ngok elites, spearheaded by the educated descendants of Deng Majok and their Abyior supporters, pursued this political position (which is categorically opposed by the provincial administration) because: firstly, they argue that they effectively participated in the war of liberation for the southern Sudan, one of the results of which has been the establishment of a complete structure of Regional self-government with executive, legislative, military and administrative organs, and that they therefore are as eligible to share and participate in this new regional State structure as any other of their brethren in the Southern Region, and that such participation would not be possible without the severance of Ngokland from the jurisdiction of South Kurdufan and its subsequent annexation to the Southern Region. Secondly they argue that the Ngok Dinka are an inseparable part of the Dinka population in Bahr Al Ghazal province to the south, and should, therefore, be allowed to become part of the unified administration of the Dinka people. Thirdly, they argue that their Arab neighbours, the Misiriyya, have consistently been mounting assaults, raids and at times fierce wars with firearms while the Ngok neither own firearms nor have they been sufficiently protected by the Central

Government in the north. This situation confirms for them the uncaring attitude

of the Central Government, and that they therefore demand to be separated from the joint administration from Al Fula of both the Misiriyya and Ngok and be made part of Bahr Al Ghazal.⁵⁶

While the Ngok intellectuals and politicians in the South were not making headway through the regional government, the reports of the Kordofan authorities indicate that they were actively pursuing alternative ways of advancing their cause. Some of these ways eventually translated into armed rebellion, which fed into the resumption of North-South hostilities. Reports by the Kordofan authorities indicate that the Ngok position was carefully coordinated with the South. A report by the assistant commissioner of Western District makes this allegation, presumably from their informants among the Ngok.

Secret information available to us from adjacent Dinka territories in northern Bahr Al Ghazal, particularly in Gogiryal [Gogrial] and Aweel [Aweil], show that there is total concurrence with the Ngok drive for annexation to the Southern Region; but there are two possibilities with respect to their integration into the administrative structure in Bahr Al Ghazal. One position holds that if Ngok migrate there, their present nine Umudiyyat [subtribes] would be accepted as they are without any change. The second position holds that any Ngok section emigrating into Bahr Al Ghazal would be integrated into the already existing systems of Sultanships and Umudiyyat and would not be allowed as they are. It is this latter position which worries those calling for emigration from South Kurdufan into the Southern Region, because they are afraid of losing their identity and status they now enjoy.⁵⁷

Whether or not the Ngok contemplated physically moving from their land, the idea must have appealed to the Arabs. For the authorities of Kordofan and the Arabs, the issue was not unity and regional solidarity but was instead a contest over prime pastoral and agricultural land. The authorities, fulfilling the fears of generations of Ngok leaders, began to claim that the land belonged to Kordofan. The implication was that if the Ngok wanted to join the South, they had to migrate as individuals; if they wanted the area, land and people, to be annexed to the South, that

decision had to be collectively made by the people of Kordofan, Dinka and Arabs alike. The commissioner articulated this position when he wrote that those who wanted to join the

South“forgot that both the Dinka Ngok and the Misiriyya Arabs have migrated to this region and that the land belongs, in the first place, to Southern Kordofan; and that they were attracted to this area because of certain qualities that it enjoys to the detriment of other regions, especially in the case of the Dinka Ngok. Therefore, the land belongs to Kordofan and, for that matter, it is the people of Kordofan as a whole who have the final say”⁵⁸ This had the ring of what had long been alleged to be the position of the North with respect to the South, that it was the land and not the people they wanted, that the land of the South belonged to the Sudan and if southerners wanted to separate, they were free to migrate to other African countries.⁵⁹

What was particularly tragic about the Ngok situation was the way the people undermined their own cause by intriguing with the Arabs against one another in the competition for political favors, a situation that is comparable to the recent divisions within the SPLM-SPLA. Individuals, especially from the Dhiendior clan or lineage of Mannyuar Omudiya or subtribe and their allies, calculatedly shifted gears and accused others of separatism, while, in the context of southern politics, they advocated that Abyei join the South. Through this double dealing they appeared to the southerners as southern nationalists while portraying themselves to the Arabs and the authorities of Kordofan as unionists, and thereby won material or political favors. These Dinka even resisted the policy of handing local control in Abyei to the educated Ngok, presumably because they feared that it would strengthen the Pajok lineage. They indeed misrepresented the policy to the Arabs as a clever step toward eventual separation.

David Cole and Richard Huntington of the Harvard Institute for International Development, who closely observed the situation, commented on the degree to which these internal rivalries and intrigues — which they perhaps, rationalizing too much, attributed to the segmentary lineage system — were ultimately harmful to the collective good of the people.

A segmentary social structure facilitates an ever narrower and shorter-

term perception of self-interest allowing an adversary to pursue a policy of divide and rule. The Ngok know painfully that it is the very essence of their society that provides for such extremes of unity and division. In their experience, the negative divisive element appears to predominate. This divisiveness depresses

them in the face of their ideological awareness of their potential familial unity. Often during these difficult times, Dinka lament, "We are a terrible people; we bring destruction upon ourselves through constant disunity and betrayal". ... The divisiveness of recent years making Ngok society vulnerable to external advances is directly attributable to the jealousies among the members of the chiefly lineages. Furthermore, among those with chiefly credentials, there is a further hierarchy at the apex of which stand the direct descendants of the recent paramount chiefs. Always there are chiefs who stand to gain by the diminution of the status of those closer to the center than they... . As the Ngok polity has become increasingly stratified, the negative and divisive aspect of the segmentary social structure has come to predominate.⁶⁰

Although these internal rivalries and competitions have their roots in tradition, they have been aggravated by the tensions among the educated representing different factions from the old order as well as by conflict between the new class of the educated and the older generation of the traditionalists.

The poet and singer Minyiel Row, himself illiterate, commented on the political turmoil in Abyei, placing blame on the educated of the lower to middle levels of the educational ladder, whom he sees as having lost the integrity of traditional values without having acquired the benefits of higher education.

When I speak with the educated, I pull myself back; With them, what one says flies around like paper blown by the wind.

A man with a small education is like a newcomer to the cattle camp; A newcomer to the camp is booed: "He is bringing flies into the camp"

When small education falls short of learning, it becomes destructive.

In the ancient land of our grandfathers and of our fathers, People were discreet in their use of words They respected one another and called each other "gentlemen."

But in the Sudan of today, if a man is polite, he is called a fool.

If you are polite, you will be swallowed.

O! O! I am truly bewildered;

I sit alone and ask myself, and I now ask you too: What is a genuinely educated person?

If you hesitate to answer me, I will tell you: A truly educated person is one who is discreet, One who reflects on what will advance the country; An educated person is one who is composed and does not engage in reckless talk; An educated person is one whose heart worries about the good of the country.

Why does the land not stand on firm ground?

Why does the land not rest on a solid back?

Why does the land not have a stable head?

We are among many kinds of people [whose views are turned upside down]; A good person is considered bad and a bad person is considered good.

To illustrate his point, Minyiel recounts a folktale in which the hyena, praying for the health of his sick child, represented himself as a morally upright person, whose prayers should be heard, in effect trying to reverse all the evils for which the hyena is known. Minyiel Row implies that the evildoers of Abyei represent themselves as virtuous.

Abyei is like the legendary camp where the Fox found people praying over a sick child.

Hyena, the father of the child, was praying: "I, Hyena, have nothing evil in me;

Even if I find someone's cow lying on the road, I never touch it; If I find a goat or a sheep sleeping outside the byre, I will take it into the byre, where the owner has gone to sleep; If an old woman forgets her leather skirt outside, I will pick it up and hang it for her to find in the morning"

The Fox heard the prayers of the Hyena and left with a smile on his face:

“ That child will not survive the day!

The spirit of death will hear the Hyena pray and take that child to the grave.

If the hyena is that pious, then who is evil?”

That is the way people speak in Abyei.

The bad person is considered good and the good person is considered bad.

Minyiel then turns to the theme of power struggle among the Dinka, which he symbolizes as everyone projecting a tall image like the giraffe and which he sees as driven by selfish motives rather than by the good of the community as a whole.

When I lie awake at night and I search my heart on what has destroyed the land, I conclude that the land has become overcrowded with men of power ... The Ngok look as though they were all begotten by the giraffe; Ours is a land in which all the people are equally tall; Even among the giraffes, some are taller than others.

What kind of fire is this that does not die?

When you find a fire refusing to die and sending smoke to the sky, There must be someone keeping the wood burning; There must be someone fanning the fire.

Is it true, O, is it true?

Are you people of Abyei creating confusion again?

With some men turning themselves into chameleons.

The outcome of all these intrigues among the Ngok Dinka themselves and between them and the Arabs inevitably led to increased tensions in the area. These eventually exploded in widespread violence, in which the Arabs used modern weapons to wreak considerable destruction on Dinka lives and property. The security forces and the authorities of Kordofan inevitably became involved. The level of violence between the Missiriya Arabs and the Dinka Ngok peaked in May and June of 1977, when a series of clashes triggered by seemingly minor incidents resulted in the death of several hundred people on both sides. The chain of violence culminated in an Arab ambush of three trucks carrying large numbers of unarmed Dinka passengers from northern towns. Among the nearly one

hundred Dinka who were killed in that ambush was Majak (Mark) Abiem, a Khartoum University lecturer who was on his way home, to conduct field research into the history of Arab-Dinka relations toward a Ph.D. degree from the London University School of Oriental and African Studies. As his posi-

tion was a rare achievement and a source of pride for the Dinka, the manner of his death was a source of great bitterness among them.

Following the incidents, a delegation led by First Vice President Major General Muhammad al-Baghir Ahmed and including Mahmoud Hasib, the commissioner of Southern Kordofan, visited the area. Detailed accounts of the events from both sides made it apparent that the atmosphere of tension, animosity and mistrust that preceded and accompanied the hostilities was more important than the factual details of the clashes or the numbers of people killed.

A peace conference was eventually convened under the chairmanship of Abdal-Rahman Abdalla, an experienced statesman who was then minister of administrative reform, assisted by a group of prominent ajaweed or mediators from various areas of Kordofan province. After two weeks of intensive, delicate negotiations, the conference eventually succeeded in concluding an agreement and reconciling the parties.

Despite the efforts of the chairman, the commissioner, and the ajaweed, fully supported by Justin Deng, to sway the militant stand of the aggrieved Dinka, district reports have only condemnatory words about Justin Deng. They reflect the Arab point of view to the total exclusion of the Dinka perspective. "That conference laid bare the intrigues engineered by Mr. Gustin Deng while he was still Assistant to the Commissioner for Abyei District. All the problems to which many people fell victims were held by all those present, to have been caused by Gustin Deng's unfriendly behaviour towards the Misiriyya. He was, subsequently, transferred to the Southern Region"⁶¹ The report was equally condemning of Kwol Adol, the young chief. "However, in [Justin's] absence, Kwol Deng Majok has been Abyior's alternate leading character to execute their secessionist designs through the assistance of his brothers in Abyei and in Khartoum"⁶²

The transfer of Justin Deng was indeed part of the provincial authorities' design to demote Abyei from district status back to a rural council. No assistant to the commissioner was posted there afterward. Official

documents also reveal that the political struggle of the Ngok elite reached a new height in 1979. The assistant to the commissioner for the Western district wrote in 1980 that the Ngok elite “no longer had confidence in either the authorities at Kadugli or the Assistant to the Commissioner at Al Fula. By adopting this defiant attitude they succeeded to attract the majority of Ngok to their lines. They openly declared their desire ... for separation from South Kurdufan”⁶³

With this perception of the situation, the Provincial People's Executive Council, no doubt prodded by the commissioner, convened with determination "to end those irresponsible actions in Ngokland." The commissioner articulated his position as follows:

Members of the Deng Majok family — while dominating positions of leadership in local popular organizations — conducted both secret and open campaigns aimed at undermining our efforts. They almost succeeded in disrupting a tribal peace conference involving Ngok and Humur that I had scheduled to take place immediately prior to the dry season influx by the Misiriyya into perennial water sources in Abyei District. The arrogance and defiant boycott of the conference by Mr. Michael Deng Majok — the secretary of the local SSU chapter — and others almost resulted in the failure of the conference had it not been for the wisdom of and assistance afforded by local Umad who attended the conference, on the one hand, and the unrelenting efforts made by the Assistant to the Commissioner who came from Al Fula to prepare for this conference at Abyei.⁶⁴

The Provincial People's Executive Council, therefore, decided to dissolve Abyei People's Rural Council; to advise the provincial secretariat for the Sudan Socialist Union (SSU) at Kadugli to take pertinent action to liquidate all activities of the local SSU chapter at Abyei; to advise the provincial judge to liquidate all activities of Abyei People's Court established by Justin Deng while he was assistant to the commissioner, and of which Kwol Deng Majok was president; and to transfer some officials from Abyei. "The provincial bureaucracy was more than prompt to effect these decisions"⁶⁵

Immediately after the meeting of June 1979 in which these resolutions were adopted, a group of Ngok elites left Kadugli for Khartoum to protest to the central government such measures, which they thought infringed upon the political rights of Ngok people in general. When their grievances were later brought to the attention of the commissioner, he responded that the "delegation does not represent the people of Abyei District ... and that it has been realized that the majority of Abyei people condemn such

behaviour... . Accordingly ... and in defense and preservation of the integrity of and respect for State authority and for laws and statutes of the land, we have deemed it necessary to make a decision suspending the employment and services of those members of the delegation who happened to be State employ-

ees”⁶⁶ He also argued that “the crux of the matter ... is that this is a consistent and unrelenting quest for the consolidation of power and authority — all power and authority — in the hands of a small group, members and associates of the Deng Majok family so that they become the be-all and end-all of Abyei district”⁶⁷

The situation continued to deteriorate rapidly, as the security forces working with the Arabs and their Dinka allies who were viewed by the people as opportunists continued to tighten their grip on the tribe at large. Young Dinka warriors, led by former Anya-Nya soldiers, were recruited, trained in guerrilla warfare, appropriately armed, and sent back to the area. They began with reprisals against those who were notorious as informants to the Arab security forces. They captured some of these individuals and handed some over to the provincial authorities in Bahr al-Ghazal, where they were detained as troublemakers.

Dinka informants soon became active in reporting on the activities of these local rebels, who became the preoccupation of the security authorities in Kordofan. The rebels inevitably clashed with the Missiriya, inflicting heavy casualties on the Arabs. The security forces intervened, and their protection enabled the Arabs to stage a massive attack on the Dinka in the winter of 1980. They fell on Dinka villages with a vengeance, burning houses, destroying the crops, looting the livestock, killing at random, and forcing masses of the people to flee southward to camp in open shelters under trees.

Information from Ngok leaders who were personally involved in the process indicates that Ngok sources, in particular those operating from the South, concluded that the people of Abyei must fend for themselves in any way they could, including armed struggle. They of course had the sympathy of the southern people and the southern regional government, despite their inability to change the situation. The regional minister of finance made available to the Ngok Dinka community a sizable amount of money which was meant to provide relief for the needy people in the area. The leaders of the Abyei community in the South, however, decided to use the fund for training and arming a local force to confront the

Missiriya Arabs and the security forces who were allied with them in their harassment of the Dinka. Apparently arms were readily available in the black market. The plan was executed, it is thought, with the discreet cooperation of the provincial and district authorities in Bahr al-Ghazal.

Minyiel Row commemorated the events with a song pleading for justice from the central government. Since the plea was in vain, he projects the last resort of the Ngok as pleading their case with God: Fire continued to blaze [as houses burned], And our cattle were driven away;

But we had no one to hear our case.

We called and called,

But no one asked what we were calling about; We cried and cried,

But no one asked why we were crying.

We talked and talked,

But no one asked what we were saying.

God, it was you who gave the Dinka the cow, And you gave the Arabs their wealth in money, The Arabs have consumed their wealth, And they have gone to capture our herds, And there is no one to whom we can take our case: Our cattle have been captured,

Our children have been captured,

And our villages have been burnt down; We are now clustering under trees like birds.

The tragedy of the Ngok was eventually brought to the personal attention of President Nimeiri, who then decided to form a high-level national committee to study the situation and recommend a course of action. The work of the committee soon turned into a highly divisive North-South political confrontation, which inexorably led to the fundamental question of whether Abyei should belong to the South or the North, an issue that went beyond what President Nimeiri had envisaged in forming the committee. The committee, nevertheless, did its job thoroughly. It investigated individuals and groups in Khartoum, visited the Abyei area, and conducted field tours of the devastated areas and the displaced

people under trees. It also held hearings in Abyei with both the Dinka and the Arabs, including a group of Ngok intellectuals, who had come from the South on a fact-finding mission for the southern regional government and had been immediately arrested by the Abyei security authorities. The tenseness of the security situation in Abyei became abundantly clear.

Dinka informants who were cooperating with the security authori-

ties expressed complaints about the local rebel activities, in particular the seizure of people suspected of cooperation with the authorities, for which they blamed the sons of Deng Majok and the Ngok community in the South. Some of them dramatized the situation by claiming that they could not speak freely for fear of reprisals from the rebels, whom they described as “the army in our forests”

Perhaps the most dramatic indication of the unscrupulousness with which the Arabs manipulated the situation was when the representative of the area in the National Assembly who was in Abyei at the time with Homr leaders, read a statement signed by Dinka chiefs written in classical Arabic declaring that the land occupied by the Ngok Dinka was Arab land that the Dinka had settled as an act of hospitality by the Arabs. One of the committee members requested that the statement be translated into Dinka, because it was almost certain that those who had signed did not know the contents of the document. Matet Ayom, from the Alei subtribe and the most prominent ally of the security forces and the Arabs, insisted that the document not be translated. With his motives so evident, the chairman of the committee authorized its translation. Once they knew what they had signed, the Dinka chiefs, one by one, disclaimed their acceptance of what they had allegedly endorsed. “We cannot unite our people through cleverness,” declared Omda Pagwot, the eldest of the chiefs.⁶⁸

The committee presented a number of alternative solutions to the president, ranging from holding a referendum on whether the Ngok should remain in the North or join the South to establishing a separate administrative arrangement for the Ngok within Kordofan. When the report was formally presented to him, Nimeiri lavishly praised the members and pledged to study it carefully before reaching a decision. Even then, it was obvious to those who knew him well that the President had already been persuaded to the Kordofan point of view and would not make any decision to alleviate the Ngok situation. Nevertheless, he intimated that he would give the people of Abyei the right to determine their future, but that he would have to wait for more opportune timing.

Several months later, a group of unidentified assassins swarmed into the Deng Majok family quarters one evening, shooting indiscriminately, and although people escaped by crawling into the cornfields around the houses, the attackers succeeded in killing one man, a teacher at Abyei elementary school. That incident led to the defection

of Michael Deng, whose Dinka name was Miokol. Michael had already been alerted that he was among the most wanted by the security forces, and when he joined the local rebels, he immediately became their leader. He was seen by the provincial authorities and soon by the national security as the most dangerous southern rebel at the time. Instead, Michael's defection was perhaps the most prominent event in a series of developments that would eventually explode into a fullscale resumption of North-South hostilities.

Although he was educated in the Arabic system of the North, Miokol had resisted conversion to Islam, probably as a political protest against the northern agenda of assimilation. Instead, he converted to Christianity and adopted the name Michael. A strong-minded young man, Miokol was reputed to have revealed from childhood certain peculiarities which were manifested in mystic chants, and he related names of places which, it was popularly believed, he could not have known or ever heard of at his age. It was therefore felt that he must have been possessed by ancestral spirits. As he grew up, these peculiarities receded, but his temperament became characterized by a cryptic speech pattern, which made him somewhat difficult to understand, and a tension bordering on hostility. He was prone to explosions of anger.

Michael was employed by the local council as a clerk and later elected as the secretary of the Sudan Socialist Union in the local unit and as the representative of the area to the central committee, in which capacity he bore the brunt of Ngok confrontation with the local Dinka adversaries, the Arabs and the Kordofan authorities. At the time of the attack on the family there were rumors that he himself risked being arrested, if not assassinated.

By that time, Anya-Nya II, the forerunner of the SPLM-SPLA, was beginning to form in dispersed areas of Bahr al-Ghazal. They had started with sporadic acts of violence that were still being publicly played down by the security authorities as isolated cases that did not indicate a trend toward a wide-scale rebellion in the South, even though it was known that groups from the Ngok area were beginning to take to the bush. These

groups were armed with weapons procured for them by Ngok politicians and intellectuals who had organized themselves in the South and were active in the areas adjacent to the Ngok Dinka, particularly in Bahr al-Ghazal. The activities of these armed groups from the Ngok became a source of increasing concern

to the authorities of Kordofan, but the central government still did not regard them as of any national significance. But the developments in the Abyei situation following the armed attack on the Deng Majok family soon raised the profile of the rebels.

After joining the rebels, Michael became not only the leader of the Ngok group, but also one of the leaders of the rapidly growing guerrilla force in the Dinka region of Bahr al-Ghazal. The Ngok had a wellknown motive among this group. Soon Michael's name became synonymous with the gradual but inexorable resumption of hostilities in the South. The national dimension of the mounting crisis heightened when the rebels attacked Ariath station on the Wau railroad on January 18, 1983, killing twelve Northern Sudanese merchants.⁶⁹

The chain of violence, perpetrated by Anya-Nya II, that subsequently spread over the South-North borders, was blamed on the Ngok Dinka under the supposed leadership of Deng Majok's sons, of whom Michael had become the hero or the villain, depending on the point of view involved. Of course, the activities of the Abyei rebel group were a minor part of the Anya-Nya II movement that was now beginning to mushroom in Upper Nile and Bahr al-Ghazal. At this early juncture, however, with the authorities still playing down the nascent rebellion elsewhere in the country, the tendency of the authorities in the South and in Kordofan was to attribute the responsibility solely to the Ngok, and more specifically, the Deng Majok family.

The national security authorities reacted swiftly. Massive arrests of Ngok leaders, including tribal chiefs and intellectuals, took place across the country. Those arrested included several sons of Deng Majok, among them Zachariah Bol, who had since left the regional government and had been practicing medicine privately in Khartoum, and Kwol Adol.

During the national congress of the Sudan Socialist Union held in the spring of 1983 (several months before the Bor incident that led to John Garang's defection and the eventual formation of the SPLM-SPLA), the governors of the southern and Kordofan regions still both blamed the

rising tide of violence on the Ngok Dinka, and more specifically on the family of Deng Majok. They charged that Nimeiri's revolution threatened them with loss of the monopoly of power over the tribe. The government of James Tumbora in the southern region, which was working in close collaboration with Vice President Joseph Lagu, was known to be anti-Dinka and working with Nimeiri on the redivi-

sion of the South, allegedly aimed at freeing the Equatorians from Dinka domination. Their position against the Ngok Dinka was not only understandable, but was also an attempt to explain away the problems brewing in the South.

After visiting the South, General Omar Muhammad al-Tayeb, the first vice president in charge of national security, again put the responsibility for the rebellion on the Ngok and went as far as declaring to the nation that the detainees would be charged with and tried for treason.⁷⁰ Even at this late hour, the national security authorities were either unaware of the seriousness of the security situation in the South or were deliberately playing it down and using the Ngok Dinka as the scapegoat, especially as they were seen as not posing a serious threat to the system. By acknowledging their rebellion and crushing it, the government would use the incident as an effective deterrent to the more potentially dangerous rebellion brewing in other areas of the South.

In a statement to the Arabic daily Al-Ayam of March 22, 1983, al-Tayeb offered this report about the security situation in the South:

Rumors typically rely on some degree of truth around which they can build a coherent fiction. I do not deny that there are groups of rebels engaged in skirmishes with our Armed Forces, but I am not unduly apprehensive about our situation. After all, at one time, the entire South was in rebellion and our Armed Forces were fighting to maintain the unity and integrity of the nation. At present we are fighting isolated groups which are small in numbers. In fact, from our tour throughout the Southern provinces we witnessed a high degree of peace and stability in the provinces of Equatoria region, and parts of Upper Nile ... However, I cannot deny that skirmishes continue between the two sides... . The Armed Forces cannot adopt the tactics of the rebels such as hiding in the bush, ambushing non-combatants, and plundering and confiscating people's property.

This does not mean, by any measure, that the rebels have the upper hand. I want to assure you that they represent only a minority of the local

population — many of whom come from Abyei and want to secede from Kordofan. I met with 9 sub-tribal chiefs [Omdas] from the area and of those 9, 7 were opposed to secession. The two that favored seceding from Kordofan were followers of

Deng Majok and his sons, extremists like Dr. Zachariah and Michael, who is in the bush. When they realized that we [the Central Government] paid them little attention, they formed a group of about 39 people and began to collect weapons from outside sources. It was not long before they began their campaign of plundering the area. In fact, they were responsible for the incident at Ariath. At present we have Dr. Zachariah in custody and will charge him before a court of law because he, more than anyone else, was behind what happened. One of the reasons for this is that Dr. Zachariah's position as regional Minister under the last government enabled him to relocate the residents of Abyei to Bahr al-Ghazal. Recently I learned of a bizarre development, that he and his supporters sent 25,000 Sudanese pounds to the relocated residents of Abyei to live presumably on the grounds that the latter are refugees. I cannot understand how a person can live as a refugee in his own country. This is a very dangerous practice. Nevertheless, we in the Central Government have the means and the capability with which to deal with practices that disrupt the security of the country.

Even as the Security Chief was playing down the rebellion in the South, the situation there was rapidly deteriorating under the impending threat of redivision of the southern region into three separate parts and the overall interference of the center in regional affairs. At about the same time as Abyei leaders were arrested, a number of prominent southerners, among them the speaker and deputy speaker of the regional assembly and several former ministers in Abel Alier's government, were also arrested on the grounds that they were planning a rebellion in the South. The resumption of a full-fledged civil war seemed imminent.

Under those circumstances the government accepted a national mediation effort aimed at alleviating the deteriorating situations in both the South and Abyei.⁷¹ It was suggested to both First Vice-President Omar Muhammad al-Tayeb and President Nimeiri that a mediation committee be established under the chairmanship of former first vice president General al-Baghir, who had participated in the Addis Ababa negotiations and for whom southerners generally had high regard. The objective would be to help southern leaders to explore a common ground

on the contentious issue of the redivision. Initially, both the

vice president and the president welcomed the idea. But when al-Baghir, who had accepted the assignment, wanted a conversation with the president to assure himself of what was expected from the exercise, he was never given the appointment. That convinced him that the mediation initiative was not really supported at the highest levels of government. And in retrospect, he was right, for the president would obviously not have welcomed an initiative that might have united the South and probably aborted his plans to divide the region into three antagonistic factions.

The Abyei initiative envisaged a mediation process between the Ngok leadership and the authorities of Kordofan. The idea was first explored with the vice-president, whose response initially seemed ambivalent. But when the president personally endorsed the initiative, the vice president, the chief of national security, and other officials in the security agency then gave it their enthusiastic support. The initiative then moved forward at full speed.

With that green light commenced a mediation that was to last several months. Its objective was to reconcile the security authorities, the presidency, and the rulers of Kordofan on the one hand, and the detained leaders of Abyei and their followers on the other.

The authorities of Kordofan, with the support of the national security leaders, at first wanted the family of Deng Majok to secure the surrender of Michael, which, of course, could not be done. The family explained to the authorities that their best option was to cultivate the cooperation of those who were still within the system to consolidate peace and security in the area. Assuming that it was achieved with mutual understanding, that could be an effective weapon against the rebels.

Winning the cooperation of the leaders of Abyei was to prove extremely difficult. The process itself was remarkable. Every morning the detainees were brought from prisons and detention homes around the three towns for the meetings, which were held at the security headquarters under conditions of comfort and relative freedom. The detainees experienced

no harassment, intimidation, or undue influence, and they were returned to their confinement at the end of the meetings.

Initially suspicious about the presence of the security officers in the discussion, the Dinka took an increasing interest in their attendance and were concerned whenever the recording officer was not taking notes. They were clearly satisfied that their point of view was getting

to the top through the security channels. It was obvious that they felt they were having a sympathetic hearing from the security authorities. And indeed there was no doubt that they objectively had a compelling case and felt assured of the third-party moderating role that the central government had always played in their relations with the Homr Arabs.

The gist of the message to the detainees was to explain the nature of the continuing struggle over the area, the threat that Abyei's potential annexation to the South posed for the pastoral Arab tribes of Kordofan, for which it was a source of water and pasture, and the extent to which the Kordofan regional and central governments were naturally aligned with Arab tribes. They were told that the historical position taken by the leaders of the tribe to remain under the jurisdiction of Kordofan had been a strategic move to circumvent confrontation over the land. If the Arabs were forced to do so by Ngok political association with the South, they could falsify history to claim the land, as they had already done, instead of displaying the gratitude that they had historically shown to Ngok leaders for access to water and grazing lands. And however absurd their claim to the land, they were likely to receive the support of the authorities at the regional and the central levels who identified with them more than they did with the Dinka. The message was tragically pessimistic and pragmatic.

In response, the Dinka rehashed in great detail the history of mistreatment, oppression, and subjugation that they had experienced at the hands of the authorities of Kordofan, who aligned themselves with the Missiriya Arabs and the local Arab traders in Abyei. They invoked their legal right under the Addis Ababa Agreement to determine their status between the North and the South. This approach, while understandable, missed the real issue. It assumed a situation of objective justice where there was none, of impartiality where the judge was inherently an interested party. The best they could expect was the old formula for the autonomous development of their area within Kordofan. They were therefore urged to endorse the main elements of the president's policy over Abyei, which had been designed to include effective control over local affairs by the people of Abyei and the provision of services and a

nationally sponsored development program in the area.

After seemingly endless discussions, lasting from early morning to late afternoon for weeks on end, an agreement was eventually reached that secured their release in a remarkable manner that appeared to

transform hostility into cordiality. The agreement was celebrated in the North as though it were a Second Addis Ababa Agreement. The South, however, received the news ambivalently as did the “opportunists” of the Ngok Dinka and the leaders of Kordofan, who were eventually won over with considerable effort.

The plan of action, which was agreed upon with the authorities of Kordofan and sanctioned by the central government, promised special administrative status for Abyei in Kordofan, with increased autonomy, services, and development activities. It was in essence an agreement to reactivate the implementation of the initial policy on Abyei without touching on the sensitive issue of the referendum provided for by the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972.

The sons of Deng Majok and the Ngok leadership issued two statements. The statement of Deng Majok's sons said:

We, the undersigned sons of Deng Majok, hereby reaffirm our commitment to the noble principles which our late father and our forefathers before him pursued for centuries within the framework of Kordofan to advance the cause of peace and unity as a link between the southern and the northern parts of the country.

Some of us have recently felt themselves driven to the call of separating the area of Abyei from Kordofan and joining it to the Southern Region in the hope of ensuring participation in the government of the country on equal footing with fellow countrymen in that region. We have now learned that one of us has even taken up arms in pursuance of this objective and with most regrettable consequences to the peace and security of our people.

While we recognize the frustrations which have led to this sad development, we remain unequivocally opposed to this destructive means of attempting a solution to the problem of Abyei.

We also declare that our objective in the area has always been to secure for our people the dignity of equal partnership in the government of their

for our people the dignity of equal partnership in the government of their country. To promote this objective in line with the ideals which our forebears have always spearheaded in the area, we have resolved to work within the framework of Kordofan and in full cooperation with our brothers and sisters in that region for the common good of all our people in the region.⁷²

The declaration of the Ngok leadership was similar in essence, although it did not, understandably, attribute the bridging role of Ngok history to any individual or family:

We, the assembled sons of Abyei, have been watching with profound sorrow and anguish the recent developments in our area and the general threat to the security of innocent people in the area. We are also deeply concerned that these developments have had the effect of reversing the historical image of our area as a vital link between the southern and northern parts of our country. Rather than the symbol of national unity and integration which it has been for centuries, our area is now seen as a point of confrontation and animosity and a threat to peace and unity, the most precious achievements of the May Revolution.

We have always considered it absolutely essential that the call for joining the South be conducted peacefully and in accordance with the constitution and the laws of the country. While we therefore recognize the frustrations of the political tensions and conflicts which have recently prompted some people in the area to resort to violent means, we totally oppose the use of violence as a means of solving the problem of Abyei.

We would also want to emphasize that we have always regarded the call for joining the South as a means and not an end in itself. The main objective has always been to secure for the people of Abyei the enjoyment of full rights of citizenship as free and equal partners in the government of their country. We therefore declare ourselves willing and ready to work within the framework of Kordofan as long as opportunities for the enjoyment of full rights of citizenship are offered to our people on equal footing with the rest of the people in the region.

We have also concluded that the policies and principles declared by His Excellency the President of the Republic for the administration and development of Abyei area as a symbol of national unity and integration constitute a sound basis for the realization of the common interests in the area. We hope to achieve this in accordance with such programmes as may be agreed upon with the authorities of Kordofan in a spirit of

cooperation and mutual understanding. 73

In a way, then, the policies that had been successfully pursued by traditional leaders for centuries, but which had become endangered, both by the political realities and by lack of historical perspective or knowledge of ancestral legacy were revived at a high level of political consciousness, sophistication, and modernity. The understanding that was reached in April 1983 between the authorities of Kordofan and elements from the Ngok Dinka brought back only a small patch of calm in what had become a sea of turbulence that would soon engulf the whole South in a second wave of civil war.

As the resolution of the Abyei situation was still being celebrated, President Nimeiri announced the division of the South into three regions.⁷⁴ Shortly afterward, the Bor and Fashalla crises triggered the full rebellion of these two military units, which were soon to become the nucleus of the SPLM-SPLA under the leadership of John Garang. The South was back in arms.

The resumption of hostilities in the South has many causes, all of which relate in one way or another to Nimeiri's gradual undermining of the Addis Ababa Agreement over the years, his eventual unilateral abrogation through the imposition of his Islamic September Laws, and the division of the South into several regions. Whether or not there was an Abyei problem, the South would in all probability have gone back to arms against the central government. But the Abyei situation was doubtless a factor that at least helped prepare the ground, particularly in those areas of Bahr al-Ghazal that are adjacent to Ngokland. The climate for rebellion was clearly influenced by the activities of the Ngok politicians and intellectuals in Juba and other areas in Bahr al-Ghazal, who presumably concluded that armed struggle could force the authorities to realize that the plight of the people of Abyei, if not given full attention, could drag the South back into conflict with the North. This was particularly the case since most Dinka felt that no sustainable peace could be achieved between the North and the South unless the Ngok problem was resolved.

With the establishment of the SPLM-SPLA, Ngok rebel forces under the

leadership of Michael left Anya-Nya II and joined the broader based movement. With the shift to the SPLM-SPLA, the Dinka troops under Michael clashed with the Nuer members of Anya-Nya II as they were crossing Nuerland. The Dinka suffered heavy casualties, estimated at over a thousand men, which considerably reduced the number of the fighting force from the Ngok area. Michael himself died

later under mysterious circumstances; some alleged that he committed suicide, depressed by the massive loss of his people, including one brother who had graduated with an engineering degree before joining the Sudan army; others supported the theory that he was assassinated by an inside competitor.

Since the massacre by Anya-Nya II, most of the rebels from the Ngok area have tended to be trained and commissioned officers from the educated class. This has given the Ngok a somewhat lopsided importance in the movement with a leadership not adequately supported by the rank-and-file from the area. Nevertheless, the profile of the Ngok members in the movement is high and includes membership in the high command.

As tensions between the North and the South escalate, the old arrangements between the respective leaders of the Ngok and the Homr become invalidated by the spreading hostilities. This became especially evident when the government began to recruit tribal militias to help fight the SPLA. The deployment of tribal militias was started by Nimeiri, continued by the transitional government after Nimeiri's overthrow, and consolidated by Sadiq's government. It focused on a militant group of the Baggara, who were perceived as traditionally among the most martial of the Arab tribes and therefore uniquely suited for the task. This group of Baggara, who became known as the marahaleen (armed mobile force) were trained, armed, and unleashed on the Dinka, who were seen as the resource-base for the SPLA. The Baggara were allowed to loot as their reward. These Arab militias proceeded to ravish Dinka country, particularly Ngokland, with a vengeance, burning villages, killing at random, looting herds, and capturing women and children to use as slave-servants, to sell, or to ransom.⁷⁵ In many ways, the area was reliving the upheavals of the nineteenth century, even experiencing the return of slavery in its classic form, but without the protection of local diplomacy which had been undermined, or of the central government, which was now totally partisan. A leading member of one of the religious sects confided to the author that Arab followers of his group in the West were asking whether it was religiously prohibited or ordained to kill a

Dinka.

The situation reached its peak in 1988–89, when conflict-related famine ravished the South. Particularly affected were northern Bahr al-Ghazal and Upper Nile and, of course Ngokland. These regions were totally deprived of their natural resource-base by the devastations

of the war. As the Ngok fled to the North in search of security, other Dinka moved from farther South into Ngokland for the same reason. Instead of finding security they encountered mass starvation. According to UN sources, deaths in Abyei in June 1988 averaged 150 a day. By November, 8,000 had starved to death. Virtually no children under two years of age were left alive. In the whole area, as many as 260,000 people were reported to have starved to death in 1988 alone. Instead of the peaceful haven that generations of Ngok leaders, and in particular Deng Majok, had so skillfully constructed, Abyei was "spotlighted in the international news media as a symbol of the tragedy and the inhumanity that has so sharply divided [the] country"⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the local leaders in Abyei, and in particular members of the leading families educated in the North and conversant with the politics of the area, continued to strive to bring whatever relief they could to their people and to work for intertribal, intraregional, and national arrangements to foster the cause of peace in the area. Successes and failures were intermittent and limited in scale as long as the war in the South continued.

NGOK-HOMR RELATIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

The focus now has shifted from the local to the national and the international levels. Even though the Abyei area has been devastated by the civil war, the family of Deng Majok continues to bear the burden of local leadership, still striving to forge understanding between communities that must coexist whatever the politics may be on the national level.

Interaction at each level produces its own dynamic. When the balance of power at the local level ensures a degree of parity in the process of interaction and when the central government remains uninvolved or maintains impartiality in regulating the situation, mutual respect and accommodation have marked the relations of the Dinka and the Arab tribes. Such was the case in precolonial times and under the impartial rule of the British. But since independence, the involvement of the government has consistently favored the Arabs and created an

asymmetry that has deprived the local people of the incentive to coexist and cooperate in the mutual interest. This negative intervention resulted in the creation of Arab militias that became the terrorist arm of

the government against the rebels and the civilian population alike. The increasing infiltration of the SPLM-SPLA into the area has resulted in several confrontations with the Arab militias, whose military capacity is inferior to that of the rebel army. Through these confrontations, a degree of parity began to emerge. The traditional sectarian parties, to which most of the local Arabs owe allegiance, are now in opposition to the military regime in Khartoum. As a result, the Arab tribes are reported to be distancing themselves from the center and making local arrangements with the neighboring Dinka tribes and even with the local SPLM-SPLA commanders to foster peaceful coexistence and cooperation. Abyei is said to be returning to its historic role as the meeting point and the cross-border market for all the neighboring tribes in the area.

These developments underscore both the imperatives of local arrangements and the implications of national and provincial involvement. Successful local arrangements must be geared to facilitating constructive interaction and peaceful coexistence. In the wider context of nation, province, and region, the linkages to the local situation could be either constructive or destructive. With the reinforcement of such divisive labels of identity as religion, Arab culture, and race, cleavages along these lines have pervaded all levels. The local communities are the most affected by the resulting hostilities and violence, yet they are the least in control of the national politics responsible for the crisis. With their pragmatic withdrawal from these disruptive central government policies, local communities are taking the initiative to remove these divisive issues from the common agenda and build cooperation on matters of mutual utilitarian interest, such as access to grazing land and water for the herds.⁷⁷ But the case can indeed be made that more often than not, locally divisive policies are formulated by leaders at the central level who do not experience the negative repercussions of their actions and can afford to be complacent and self-righteous. If the nation is to enjoy peace at all levels and to foster a constructive process of nation building, workable policies and measures of implementation will have to be autonomously developed at each level. Then the linkage of these levels will have to ensure harmonization, consistency and comprehensiveness for the collective good of the nation.

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The lessons that the Abyei situation presents to the nation and the central importance of the identity factor can be summarized in several points. First, the Ngok-Homr context is a microcosm of the North-

South context in that the basis of the dichotomy has to do with a sense of identity that divides the people into Arabs and Africans, however problematic the grounds for such identification may be. Second, in this dualism the Arab identity has dominated as an external power akin to colonial control and domination. Third, not only are the dominated and the dominator similar in composition, but they have also been mutually interactive and interdependent. While the South has influenced the Ngok more than the reverse, the unresolved crisis in the Ngok area has had repercussions in the South. Fourth, the resumption of hostilities in the South, while caused by the dynamics in the North-South conflict, was to a degree affected by the unresolved situation in the Abyei area. Fifth, it is the general consensus in the South, certainly among the Dinka, that sustainable peace between the North and the South can never be achieved without taking into account the Ngok Dinka. Sixth, the resolution of this conflict will have to balance between the Ngok Dinka identification with the South and the pragmatic, material, or economic dependence of the Arab tribes on the pasture and water sources in Ngokland, without which they could not survive. Seventh, peace will hinge on whether political autonomy in a united or separated Sudan, could be combined with economic arrangements that would permit free interaction and sharing of vital resources across the political boundaries. And finally whatever the details of any arrangements pertaining to the sharing of resources, the Ngok are southerners in the first place, and their ability to mediate between the South and the North must be seen in that context. Any solution to the national crisis of identity that envisages a North-South dichotomy must place the Ngok in the South. Their bridging role will continue wherever they are administratively affiliated, but the resolution of the identity crisis must unequivocally identify them with the South. Should the Sudan eventually agree on a formula that keeps the country united, the arrangement will probably make the Ngok part of a southern region, state, or province or create a special border status. Whatever the solution, it must guarantee that the people feel genuinely free from any control or domination by the Arabs, whether as Homr, Missiriya, Kordofan, or the North. The people must truly identify with the nation, feel equal without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, culture, or gender and aspire to equitable participation in the political economic

gender, and aspire to equitable participation in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country.

PART 5 External Dimension

Chapter 9 Dilemmas of External Linkages

The configuration of identities in the Sudan has been the outcome of historical ties with the outside world. While these connections have had the positive effect of extending Sudan's ties into the outside world, domestically they have torn the country apart, destroying its internal cohesiveness and unity of purpose. The only significant exception to this pattern occurred during the period of the Addis Ababa Agreement, when the internal and the external circles and their respective agendas came closest together. For the first time during this period, the Sudan was quite effective in playing its postulated role as a bridge or a mediator between Africa and the Middle East, and it became a dynamic force for moderation and conciliation.

Most people accept the historical explanation, but there is controversy over the extent to which the causes of the present conflict in the Sudan are internally or externally generated. Many would argue that the Sudanese conflict is essentially the result of internal causes and that external factors are marginally relevant. It is important to distinguish between foreign involvement in the conflict and external systems that act as models for the perceptions of Sudanese identity. While direct foreign involvement has had minimal lasting effect, externally based models of identity have been at the core of the racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious configuration of the Sudan. Even here, a distinction should be drawn between popular self-perceptions and the elite's politicization of identity through domestic and foreign policies. While the first also affect the degree to which people are differentiated and perhaps stratified, the latter makes the identity question a public issue of nation building because it concerns the basis for participating in the shaping and sharing of power and other value processes.

Mansour Khalid articulated the difference between foreign intervention and the relevance of external symbols to the Sudanese sense of identity when he addressed a Woodrow Wilson Center workshop on the prospects for peace and unity in the Sudan: "The external factors, if

anything, are only a reflection of Sudan's crisis of national identity and the inability of northern Sudanese, particularly the ruling elite, to come to terms with themselves, face realities, and articulate a genuine vision of Sudanese national identity to the outside world.”¹ Elaborating on the domestic roots of the problem, Khalid indicated the degree to which this elite perception has permeated the whole Sudanese political culture.

“The Sudanese conflict is about national self-identification. It is a cultural problem which affects all Sudanese, from all regions, and which has disturbed the peace and unity of Sudan for over 30 years. There is still no consensus among Sudanese as to what kind of country Sudan is. Are we Arabs? Are we Africans? Are we Afro-Arabs? Are we Muslims? What is Sudan and what does it mean to be Sudanese?”²

The relevancy of answers to these questions rests on the fact that foreign policy is largely an extension of domestic policy as a basis for external relations. Mansour Khalid, who played a leading role in shaping foreign policy under the Nimeiri regime, has observed:

For an independent foreign policy to be formulated and have credibility, it would have to be preceded by broad-based home measures designed to foster solidarity within the Sudan, so that the nation could first identify with itself before it could relate to the outside world; the problems of the Sudan go beyond its geographic boundaries. Without this there will never be a national consensus on foreign policy and the Sudan's foreign policy will always remain an extension of the policies of others, sometimes only for the satisfaction of personal pride. So inaction at home and confusion abroad left merely the impression of a rudderless vessel tossed by whatever political storm should arise.³

Two principal patterns of correlation between domestic and foreign policies emerge from the country's experience since independence: one, essentially the dominant theme, is the degree to which the Arab-Islamic identity has been the principal foundation on which Sudan's foreign policy has been predicated; the other is the way the reconciliation of the African and Arab identities through the Addis Ababa Agreement enabled the Sudan to play a bridging and moderating role in the Afro-Arab region.

This chapter illustrates the correlation between the dynamics of identity inside the country and its reflection in Sudan's external relations focusing on one broad foreign policy issue, the Arab-Israeli conflict. Two contrasting Sudanese responses to the

situation are given to demonstrate how the government's perceptions of national identity determined Sudan's foreign policy stance. The first instance concerns Sudan's response to the Six-Day War, when Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub, the most dominant figure in shaping Sudaes foreign policy, was prime minister. His government's response reflected an uncompromising Arab hard line. The other instance relates to Sudan's more conciliatory response to the Camp David accords at a time when the domestic and foreign policies of the Sudan were significantly shaped, or at least influenced, by the domestic reconciliation under the Addis Ababa Agreement. The chapter then examines the way in which the shifting domestic grounds that culminated in the abrogation of the agreement plunged the country back into the internally and externally divisive pattern of Arab-African polarization.

ARABISM AND THE SIX-DAY WAR

Israel's crushing defeat of the Arabs in the Six-Day War of 1967 left the Arab world humiliated and shattered in a manner that challenged Arab unity. The Sudan stood in solidarity with the Arab world and played a role anchored both in supporting a hard line against Israel and fostering internal reconciliation among the Arab leaders, who were divided by their internal conflicts and ambitions. The key role was played by Sudan's prime minister Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub, a man who, in the words of one author, "had been at the center of power more frequently than perhaps any other Sudanese politician since independence, [and] ... who in many ways was regarded as the personification of Northern Arab Sudanese conservatism" or perhaps more accurately identity.⁴ Mahjoub is also well known for his commitment to Pan-Arab unity, a position derived not only from his political stance, but also from his admiration of Arab culture and civilization. For Mahjoub, as for most of the northern Sudanese who identify with Arabism, the connection is as racial as it is cultural, but the religious and cultural dimensions become paramount because of the obvious anomalies of the racial aspect of Arabism when applied to the Sudan. This is especially reflected in the love for the Arabic language, which is not only associated with Arab origin, but is sanctified as the language of Islam. Mahjoub, also a poet, clearly relished the language as a

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dominant feature of Arab identity. Recalling a conversation with King Hassan of Morocco, he wrote:

King Hassan II is one of the few Arab leaders who are masters of the Arabic language. As a poet myself, I can particularly appreciate his mastery. I once asked him after the end of a conference, how he had acquired it. He told me that after he returned from studying in Paris, his father, King Mohammed V, brought over teachers from the Karanoun University near Fez who put the young prince on the mat and taught him Islamic law and the Arabic language.

"God bless your father's soul," I commented. "He bestowed on you a treasure for which you and all the rest of us should be grateful."

He seemed a bit nonplused. "I know I should be grateful. But why you?"

I replied: "At least for some of the time, we at the Conference were not subjected to hearing incorrect Arabic grammar. And this, I assure Your Majesty, is a great blessing."

He smiled but made no comment.⁵

Since this particular aspect of Mahjoub's outlook correlates his political orientation with the identity dimension of his foreign policy perspective, an insight into his personal background is essential to appreciating the role he played in Arab circles following the Six-Day War. Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub was born in 1908 at Duem in Blue Nile Province. His father, from Shaigiya tribe, came from a very modest background; his mother was from the well-known Ja'ali Ansari family of the Hashamab. One source claims that although he was "Every inch the aristocrat, he had a mother who was, reputedly, a slave."⁶ Although this is categorically refuted by those who know the family it is possible, as is the case in most families, that a grandmother or someone in the line was of known slave background, and this was exaggerated by some ill-intentioned gossip. In any case, while the maternal background was well known, the paternal was rather obscure, except that the father was known to have been poor and is said to have "disappeared" or died early.

and is said to have disappeared or died early.

Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub was raised by his mother's family.

When he was of school age, the family moved to Omdurman, where Muhammad went to school and later studied engineering at the Gordon Memorial College. After graduating and working as an engineer for some time, he was one of the first to be selected to study law in Gordon College's newly opened School of Law. Subsequently he served as a district judge until he resigned in the mid-1940s to enter politics while practicing law as an advocate.

In politics Mahjoub played a key role in the independence movement, initially under the umbrella of the literary societies of Abu Ruf and al-Fajr. In his literary contributions, Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub stressed the distinctive and independent character of Sudanese culture, which he believed should develop separately from the Egyptian culture and should be “firmly based on Islam, Arabic culture, and African soil”.⁷ Although Sudanese culture should retain its distinctive character, Mahjoub argued, it should “learn from the culture and thought of all other nations both ancient and modern.”⁸ Mahjoub, “who alone among the writers of his generation showed a constant and clear-minded concern with the question ... [articulated] the goals ... of the ... literary movement in the Sudan in a remarkable pamphlet [Al-Haraka al-Fikriya Fi-l-Sudan — The Literary (or Intellectual) Movement in the Sudan — published in 1941]:

The objective towards which the literary movement in this country should be directed is to establish an Islamic-Arabic culture supported and enriched by European thought and aimed at developing a truly national literature which derives its character and its inspiration from the character and traditions of the people of this country, its deserts and jungles, its bright skies and fertile valleys.... By giving an increasingly more prominent place to political studies of a kind more directly concerned with our problems and ambitions, this movement should then be transformed from a cultural to a political movement whose final goal should be the achievement of the political, social and cultural independence of this country.⁹

This position essentially reflected the political dynamics of the time in which the educated class was torn among various positions. Some

avored the unity of the Nile Valley between Egypt and the Sudan as an anti-British strategy; others stressed independence in tactical alliance or cooperation with Egypt; still others wanted the Sudanese to

be self-reliant in their struggle for independence against the two condominium powers — Britain and Egypt. Mahjoub belonged to the group that became increasingly dominant among the politically active intellectuals who “began to think that the best way of achieving their final objectives was to rely on their own efforts, using whatever help they could get from Egypt but without reliance on the permanent support of any outside forces.”¹⁰

This position reflected a considerable ambivalence toward the two ruling powers. Britain guarded against any Egyptian designs over the Sudan by advocating the line of the Sudan for the Sudanese. In that respect Britain was a force to be used to promote independence, and yet, it was the colonial power effectively dominating both the Sudan and Egypt. In the perspective of the young Sudanese in Mahjoub's group, “Egypt, after all, was a neighbour and a Muslim Arab country which, despite its formal independence since 1922 was, like the Sudan, still under the effective (and humiliating) control of British imperialism. It was, therefore, a natural ally against the common enemy....”¹¹

The tension between trying to curb Egypt's political designs on the Sudan and cooperating with it as a fellow Arab-Muslim country would become a permanent feature of Sudanese policy. Mahjoub would become the very embodiment of that ambivalent tension, jealously guarding Sudan's independent identity. On the one hand, he saw this identity as a unique blend of cultural values derived from Arab-Islamic sources, planted and nourished on African soil. On the other hand, he saw Egypt as the embodiment of the best in Arabic and Islamic cultural heritage and the gateway to the Arab world, for which he retained deep sentiments of identification and pride. Egypt's emergence as the leader of the Arab world only sharpened the ambivalence for the Sudanese in general and for Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub in particular.

The attitude of the educated northern Sudanese youth toward the Arab-Muslim world, its cultural heritage, and its contemporary politics was part of the wider philosophy or ideology of liberation from Western colonial domination. Edward Atiyah, who taught in Gordon Memorial College and

later joined the intelligence department of the Anglo-Egyptian administration, observed this phenomenon closely. Drawing a sharp distinction between the ordinary Sudanese and the modern elite, he wrote, "the small class of educated Sudanese, town intelligentsia, government officials, mainly the product of government

schools, the only class in the country created by the British and, ironically the only class that was beginning to resent British rule.... The educated Sudanese, as a class, were unhappy. Their minds were being warped, their souls soured, and I knew the reasons ... as no Englishman could."¹² For Atiyah, Sudanese nationalism and hatred of the British represented a reaction against humiliation and an attempt to retrieve a sense of dignity, which had been destroyed and supplanted by a feeling of inferiority.

Sudan's foreign policy after independence was dominated by two main ideological themes: identification with the Arab world and the ambivalences of East-West relations. The latter in part reflected the domestic rivalry between the dominant religious elements and the radical left, the religious factor combining with the continuing ties with Great Britain and the West, countered by the pull of the left toward the Eastern bloc. The connection with Africa trailed behind these factors, and it was based more on geography and a moral obligation to assist black Africa in its struggle for independence and development than on genuine racial, ethnic, or cultural affinity.

Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub was thus the product of a system of education, acculturation, and politicization that was predicated on a psychological and strategic identification with an Arab-Islamic identity. This was viewed as an instrument for self-liberation, while the African identity was rejected as humiliatingly primitive and backward, grounds for enslavement. All these complex factors contributed to Mahjoub's outlook on the political dynamics of the racial, cultural, and religious identity of the country and its place in the world.

Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub became foreign minister of the newly independent Sudan in the Umma-dominated coalition government in 1956, and he held the position until General Ibrahim Abboud took power in the military coup of 1958. After Abboud was ousted in 1964, Mahjoub became prime minister when parliamentary democracy returned in 1965. Although he was briefly replaced by Sadiq al-Mahdi in June 1966, he resumed the prime ministership in May 1967 and remained in power until

the coup of Jaafar Nimeiri in 1969. Known for his tough line against the southern rebel movement, Mahjoub “was noted during his periods of power for his antipathy to the South.”¹³

The irony of his position toward the South, expressed in some of the most repressive and atrocious policies in the history of the conflict, is that he was highly admired in the North as a man who stood for the

ideals of democracy and respect for human rights, which was supposedly the essence of the title of his memoirs, *Democracy on Trial*. Mansour Khalid, who observed him at close range, has written that “Mahjoub was a democrat, in temperament, style of government, as well as in his private life.”¹⁴ The context for which Mahjoub advocated democracy was of course the North, and his plans nearly always excluded the South. Although Mansour Khalid “quoted and requoted” Mahjoub's memoirs, his own “narrative ... tells a different story about this great democrat; the way he acted and behaved in the South, a world that lies beyond what the ruling elite consider to be the Sudan. But more astounding is the conclusion he came to that democracy has failed in Sudan, not because of all his own damning remarks about its working in Sudan, but because [referring to military coups] a cluster of officers pulled out a few tanks from the barracks and marched into town.”¹⁵

When Mahjoub became premier, his southern policy was to crush the rebellion in the South. For him, the problem was entirely one of law and order. He “called for an increase in arms and equipment for the Army to combat the continuing rebellion.” As he himself testified in his memoirs, “My orders to the Army were to destroy rebel camps and hunt the rebels.”¹⁶ Although Mahjoub acknowledged that his campaign in the South “was a costly exercise” since the “prestige expenditure of the ousted military regime had depleted our foreign exchange,” he nevertheless felt that “the provision of more and better equipment for the Army and an increase in salary for troops sent to the South were regarded as of top priority.” Building on this internal perspective, Mahjoub's foreign policy was aimed at reinforcing the government to fight the war in the South while diplomatically countervailing the activities of the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM). As he noted, “Some Arab countries, notably the UAR, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, helped us with arms, ammunition and funds.”¹⁷

The intention here, however, is not to rehash the destructive and divisive role this otherwise democratic leader for the North played as a colonial ruler in the South; rather it is to show how his Arab-Islamic orientation, which was dividing his own country internally motivated and shaped his

policies and actions externally especially among the Arabs.

Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub was undoubtedly most prominent in Arab circles: physically towering, a brilliant lawyer, exceptionally articulate in both English and Arabic, and a distinguished poet in Arabic,

a language he loved exceedingly. Mahjoub even sought to champion the cause of Arabism better than the Egyptians did, in his opinion. With the classic Sudanese ambivalences toward Egypt lingering in him, Mahjoub questioned the extent of Egypt's commitment to the cause of Arab nationalism. "Egypt has by far the richest Arab heritage and the largest Arab population. Arabs have therefore looked to Cairo as the citadel of pan-Arabism. But Cairo has not always fulfilled this role. As political leaders, Mohammed Abdu, Saad Zaghloul, Mustafa Kamil were Egyptian, not Arab, nationalists. As political thinkers and writers, Lutfi El Sayid, Taha Hussein and Al-Agga were Egyptian, but not Arab, nationalists.... When the revolution of July 23, 1952, brought Gamal Abdel Nasser and his colleagues to power, they were not much better than the thinkers, writers and politicians in their outlook towards pan-Arabism."18

Mahjoub's pride in Arabism, apparent in his portrayal of the Arab past glory and yearning for its revival, recalls the picture painted by Edward Atiya about the manner in which his students at Gordon Memorial College, where Mahjoub studied, identified themselves with the historical glory of Arabism and Islam, denying their African reality to combat the sense of inferiority inflicted on them by Western conquest. Mahjoub first acknowledged "the glorious past of Islam, which unified the Arabian peninsula under one religion, and moved Islamic — mainly Arab — armies to the conquest of both the Persian and Byzantine empires," a move that began in the seventh century and continued until the thirteenth. With patriotic pride, he recalled, "It was no doubt a glorious epoch for nomadic tribes which found a new esprit in their new faith, a new fervour for conquest. Under the Ummayyad and Abbasid caliphates some of the Caliphs were men of wisdom and brilliance and their achievements in different fields were numerous."19 Then he lamented the decline of the Arabs as a forceful element: "The power of the Abbasids was eventually extinguished by the Mongolian hordes of Genghis Khan and his successors.... The real power moved into the hands of non-Arab Muslims."20

To Mahjoub, then, Arabism is more than the Arabic language and culture and the Islamic religion. Being Arab was something in the blood —

genealogy ethnicity or race — real or assumed, but sustained by historical association and a rising sense of embracing nationalism. Mahjoub did not stop at merely reflecting the past and contemporary realities of the Arab identity and its politics; he postulated pan-

Arabism as an objective to be pursued with vigor. And indeed, much of his illustrious diplomatic career was devoted to the promotion of Arab nationalism.

Mahjoub's Arab colleagues often designated him as their spokesman because of his personal attributes, and in particular his verbal skills. But in this, he was not necessarily unique, as Sudanese representatives in Arab circles often seem to enjoy that privilege. Ironically, it is a privilege that derives as much from their identification with Arabism as it is an aspect of their marginality to the Arab world. That marginality explains the compensational intensities of Sudanese identification with Arabism and the Arab cause and the degree to which Sudanese are accepted as mediators among the Arabs, to whom they are distant relatives and therefore more impartial in intra-Arab feuds.

Mahjoub acted as a spokesman for the Arab delegations in introducing a draft resolution on the situation in the Middle East in 1958 in the wake of the Iraqi revolution, which triggered American and British intervention in Lebanon and Jordan. Mahjoub made the blood component of the Arab identity explicit in that introduction. His recollection of this is revealing: "I am not speaking this time in the name of the delegation of the Sudan," he said. "It is my honour and privilege to speak in the name of all ... the ten Arab States which are related not only by a common language or a common heritage of history and culture, but also by blood."²¹ Mahjoub stressed that the resolution was cosponsored by all the Arab states as a result of frank deliberations among themselves over what they regarded as a dispute between family members. "We have had strong ties in the past; we have strong ties at present, and we all aspire to a glorious future for Arab nations in order to contribute once again to the human heritage in the fields of knowledge and human welfare."²²

His aspiration for the Arabs was poetically euphoric:

For us, Arabs, this will be the beginning of a glorious future. It will be the beginning of strengthening our ties, cooperating among ourselves, and being tolerant with each other. We shall, no doubt, do all that is possible

to realize our hopes and aspirations, and cooperate among ourselves wholeheartedly. We hope that we will be able to contribute to the well-being of our Arab nation, whether that nation remains distributed among different independent states, in a regional organization, or under any form of govern-

ment to which the peoples of the Arab lands will agree, or become one state.... Once more, the light will come from ... [the East]. Our ... mission henceforth will be the pursuit of human perfection, peace and security and not destruction and annihilation of the human race.²³

The exaggerated identification with the cause of Arab nationalism as well as the ambivalences involved, both of which are embedded in the marginality of Sudanese Arab identity, were most manifest in Sudan's, in fact Mahjoub's, role in the Arab reaction to the defeat by Israel in the Six-Day War of 1967.

At the outbreak of the war, the Sudan, along with the rest of the Arab countries, declared war on Israel. Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub presented the declaration of war for the confirmation of Parliament. Bona Malwal, then a young member of Parliament from the South, recalled:

Mahjoub came to Parliament and declared war on Israel. He said that from that day, Sudan considered itself at war with the state of Israel. The Speaker then opened the floor for discussion. I asked for the floor and said that it was wrong for Mahjoub to declare war on Israel because the Sudan itself is in a state of war which Mahjoub was incapable of winning or otherwise ending. How could the Sudan be capable of fighting an external war? Sudan should put its own house in order. In any case, as a Southern Sudanese, I said, I would not want to stand up for a war against Israel which I regard to be racial. I wanted to go on record as not supporting the declaration of war.²⁴

Mahjoub was outraged not only by the position Bona Malwal took against the declaration of war, but by his characterization of the Arab-Israeli conflict as racially based. "Mahjoub, in an instantaneous outburst, got up and said, 'I wonder what kind of intellectuals we have in the Southern Sudan! They should know that our Arabism. is not racism; it is cultural. The war against Israel is a war to preserve our Arab culture.'"

Apparently, the speaker saw a sharp division emerge between northern and southern members on the issue. "Unfortunately," Bona explained, "the Speaker did not allow any debate because the house was going to

the Speaker did not allow any debate because the house was going to be divided on racial lines. He said that the Prime Minister's

statement had been intended to inform the Parliament. If the Parliament wanted to debate the statement, it would have to decide on a separate agenda item and specify the time for such a debate.” Bona Malwal again got up and requested that a debate be held on the prime minister's statement, since the government was not authorized by the constitution to declare war without parliamentary approval. “But the Speaker just ruled me out of order. Parliament never debated or took a decision on Mahjoub's declaration of war against Israel.”

An Arab conference was held in Khartoum at the end of August 1967. According to Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub, “Khartoum was the only politically acceptable conference site for both conservative and extremist Arab leaders. At that particular moment of history there would have been objections to any other Arab capital hosting a full assemblage of Arab leaders.”²⁵ While Mahjoub does not explain his assertion, it is obvious that Sudan's Arab marginality must have counted significantly. Commenting on the role of Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub under those dramatic circumstances, one author has written that a drawback from the perspective of Sudan's African neighbors was Mahjoub's decision to play an active role in Arab politics, posing as a conciliator.

The geographical marginality and perhaps the openness of Sudanese politics and society made Sudan relatively acceptable in this most difficult of tasks in the Arab world, and Mahjoub took to it with evident delight. His moment came in the wake of the crushing defeat of the Arabs, especially Nasser, in the Six-Day War of 1967 when Mahjoub was able to achieve his greatest success in foreign policy. First came his mediation between two of Sudan's neighbours, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, over the Yemen, which was followed by the withdrawal of Egyptian troops. This led to the broader gathering of the Arab summit in Khartoum in August 1967 where a new spirit of conciliation and realism was shown.²⁶

As the host, Mahjoub chaired the foreign ministers' meeting that preceded the summit. Addressing his colleagues, he said in his keynote statement:

what took place between the fifth and tenth of June was ... but an onslaught upon our very existence and our culture. You will be mistaken if you think that the Zionist imperialist aggression is satisfied with the Arab territory it has devoured; what we see is

just the beginning of a neo-colonialist attack, aimed at the people before their land, at history before geography at the very roots of our existence and not its form.

Any unified Arab action which does not restore Arab dignity and sense of honour at this fateful moment, can only deepen the setback, and help to realise the military objectives of the colonialist political conspiracy.²⁷

The president of the Council of State, Ismail al-Azhari, represented the Sudan in the summit meeting of the Arab leaders. Reporting in his capacity as chairman of the foreign ministers' meeting, Mahjoub repeated the theme of the threat to Arab identity. One author noted: "A limited number of positive results were accomplished easily: Nasir's reconciliations with Husayn and Faisal were confirmed; Libya, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait agreed to subsidize Jordan and the UAR for their revenue losses at a combined rate of \$392 million per year (two thirds of this sum going to the UAR); the Yemen problem, which had lost its primary significance as an Egyptian-Saudi test of strength after the June war, was finally laid to rest as the Egyptians agreed to evacuate their remaining force."²⁸

The Khartoum summit adopted a resolution with the infamous three no's: no recognition of Israel, no negotiations, and no peace treaty.²⁹ And needless to say, Arab countries, including the Sudan, broke relations with the United States and Britain during the war. Sudan's relations with the West were restored only in 1972 following the Addis Ababa Agreement. The United States, along with other Western countries, assisted generously in the task of relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction of the South. The Sudan then took the initiative to restore and normalize relations.

Mahjoub's passionate representation of the Arab point of view and his tireless efforts to unite the Arab world against Israel sharply contrasted not only with the violent division within his own country, expressed in an internecine war, as Bona Malwal, the young member of Parliament had argued, but also magnified the impact of that internal situation on the

relations between the Sudan and its African neighbors. The irony is that the Sudan remained more marginal to the Arab world than it was to its African neighbors. As one author has noted,

Although Mahjoub continued to be active in foreign affairs, Sudan was no more central to Middle East politics than the regions problems were to Sudan's internal developments. With the Egyptian

question having been replaced by the southern problem it was civil war that was the most important element of Sudan's external relations. And with Mahjoub preoccupied with Arab politics and his army killing Africans in the south, his African neighbours became less inclined to cooperate and tended explicitly or tacitly to favour the Anya Nya. In the end, the predominance of domestic conflict asserted itself over foreign relations, and the last months of faltering civilian rule were bereft of a significant international dimension.³⁰

Northern Sudanese leaders have, of course, always been aware of Sudan's presence in Africa and its role as a link with the Middle East, but this aspect of their identity has never stimulated the same degree of sentimentality reflected in their identification with the Arab world. The result of attempting to balance their sentimental attachment to Arabism and their pragmatic recognition of the African context is usually an emotionless blend that still avers Arab identity. Mahjoub reflected this delicate equation when he wrote in his memoirs that "for geographical, ethnic, historical and cultural reasons, the Sudan is African," but quickly went on to say, "Yet it will continue to be Arab in outlook and destiny. As a country, it is a geographical spearhead of the Middle East into Africa, south of the Sahara."³¹

ADDIS ABABA AND CAMP DAVID

Sudan's hard-line policy on the Middle East in the aftermath of the Six-Day War contrasted sharply with its more conciliatory support of the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel. This shift was significantly influenced by the climate of reconciliation that the Addis Ababa Agreement brought to the country transforming the Sudan into a strong advocate of peaceful resolution of conflicts. With that domestic accomplishment as a basis for its foreign policy the Sudan became acknowledged as a moderator in Arab and African circles and an ally of the Western world, for which peaceful settlement of disputes was a high diplomatic priority.

Although Nimeiri provided the political climate and, of course, had the ultimate word as the military ruler, Mansour Khalid played a central

intellectual and political role in shaping domestic and foreign pol-

icy during this most conciliatory and constructive period in Sudan's contemporary history. The period during which he steered Sudan's foreign policy brought domestic and external factors into positive synchronicity in a manner that had never been witnessed before. The major shift was that internal considerations dictated foreign policy lines rather than the reverse. Before Mansour Khalid's foreign policy the history of identity formation in northern Sudan and its confrontation with the identity of resistance in the South had been for the most part externally oriented. The short period following the Addis Ababa Agreement and preceding the resumption of hostilities as a result of Nimeiri's unilateral abrogation of that agreement testifies to the potential of alternative arrangements for accommodating the racial, cultural, and religious diversities of the Sudan.³² It also shows that with a domestic consensus, the Sudan is capable of generating external cooperation with the Arab-Islamic world and with other partners on the basis of the collective interest and a mutually beneficial exploitation of national resources.

Perhaps for the first time in its modern history, the Sudan took a major step forward in translating what had always been a promising potential into a reality — reconciling its internal differences, bridging between Africa and the Middle East, and offering the world a model of peace and stability that was internationally applauded. In support of this achievement, the international community responded promptly and generously in assisting the Sudan with the emergency phase of relief, resettlement, and rehabilitation and undertook to support the challenge of development. For the first time, the pluralism of the internal identity configuration and its linkage to the outside world came together in a manner that promised mutual benefit to the Sudan and its partners in the international community.

For the Sudan, this period also provided an opportunity for reshaping its external relations to build on these features to generate and sustain international cooperation in the long-term challenge of nation building. These objectives were indeed consciously fostered almost as an ideology, at least a strategy, which effectively replaced the war

psychology of seventeen years and captured the imagination of the nation. The Sudan was projected as an advocate of peaceful resolution of conflicts and a force for moderation in the region in conjunction with the potential of the country as an ideal context for international partnership in development.

Perhaps the most important feature of the Addis Ababa Agreement is that it symbolized a reconciliation between the Arab and the African elements, which promised the continent of Africa its first optimistic framework of Afro-Arab cooperation. To share this perspective with African leaders, the Sudan decided to produce a book after the first year of a successful experience with the Addis Ababa Agreement to be dedicated by the president to the Organization of African Unity in celebration of its tenth anniversary. The book, *Peace and Unity in the Sudan: An African Achievement*, was written by a team in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and formally presented by President Nimeiri to his fellow heads of state and government as an anniversary present. The dedication, signed by Nimeiri himself, stated: "In the spirit of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity we have prepared this book and now dedicate it to the Organization of African Unity to mark the occasion of its tenth anniversary, whose date 25th of May, is so happily shared by our Revolution which has restored peace to our country, united our people, and given them a new hope for happiness and progress."³³

The study was primarily a policy-oriented perspective on the history of the Sudan with a critical appraisal of the policies of the previous governments. It was especially critical of the imbalances in those governments' politics of identity which had favored Islam and Arabism and sought to assimilate the African into that mold. The Addis Ababa Agreement was seen as a correction of those inequities and a strategic accommodation of both identities within a framework that would permit a peaceful and harmonious interaction that was likely to foster equitable integration. The framework, the process, and the prospective outcome were seen as fostering a unique Sudanese identity that would defy such exclusive labels as Arabism or Africanism. At the same time, the agreement offered an intermediary linkage, and an integrative interaction that were mutually enriching without compulsion.

Before publication, the manuscript was read and reviewed by top political and diplomatic advisers and cleared as an authoritative reflection of official policy principles. One of the ironies of the Sudanese situation is that during the heyday of the Addis Ababa Agreement, a national vision,

which now appears idealistic, even utopian, was accepted as commonplace and pronounced as official policy. That Nimeiri's policies were able to turn much of that into empty verbalism

indicates both the superficiality of policies promoted through authoritarian rule and the distance between intellectual conceptualizations and political realism. And yet, for a decade following the Addis Ababa Agreement, these ideals inspired Sudan's foreign policy and diplomatic activities in a way that effectively used domestic achievements as a basis for winning international admiration, support, and development cooperation.

The impact of the Addis Ababa Agreement went far beyond Sudan's immediate neighbors. Since the accord was a by-product of an ideological turnaround following the abortive communist coup of 1971, government policy especially fostered cooperation with the Western world and in particular the United States. The Sudan became the first Arab country to reestablish diplomatic relations with the United States after the rupture resulting from the Six-Day War. The United States was the most generous contributor to Sudan's relief, rehabilitation, and resettlement program.

Initially the nations of the Arab world were suspicious of the agreement because they mistook it as a gain for the non-Arab identity of the Sudan and a loss for the Arabs. But they eventually understood it for what it was, a win-win situation. The extremists in the Arab world, however, persisted in seeing it not only as a loss for the Arab identity inside the country, but also as a disadvantage for the Arab cause internationally since the Sudan, with its new composition, could no longer be counted on to support the radical Arab position it had previously advocated. This was essentially the reason behind the tragic assassination in March 1973 of the new American ambassador in Khartoum, Cleo Noel, and his deputy, George Moore, by the Black September Palestinian terrorists while the country was celebrating the first anniversary of the Addis Ababa Agreement in the provincial capital of Juba.³⁴ Nimeiri reacted fervently promising to turn every day of the assassins' lives "black." The terrorists were eventually tried, and, although they were initially expected to receive the death penalty, sentenced to prison terms. For reasons that were not made known, but presumably concerned Arab pressures on the Sudan and fear of terrorist reprisals against key personalities in the regime, Nimeiri decided to hand the convicts over to the Palestine

Liberation Organization (PLO) in Cairo. This was an outcome that surprised even the Sudanese, especially as missions abroad had been asked to request protection from the host countries in anticipation of the verdict and the sentenc-

ing. The United States, enraged by this, all but broke diplomatic relations with the Sudan.

Intensive efforts by the new ambassador in Washington, a southerner, who had evidently been selected both to make use of his familiarity with the United States and to reflect the positive developments resulting from the internal settlement, were eventually crowned with a dramatic reversal of the policy in favor of normalization of relations. This was followed soon afterward by President Nimeiri's successful visit to the United States, which lasted for three weeks and took him to nine states.³⁵ The purpose of the visit was to cultivate relations with Washington and to attract investment from the private sector. The objectives of Sudan's foreign policy and diplomatic activity in the United States were reflected in a piece prepared by the embassy entitled "The Sudan: Opportunities for International Cooperation in Development," which Senator Charles Percy of Illinois entered into the Congressional Record of June 20, 1975.

Senator Percy stated:

As a result of recent conversations with the Sudanese Ambassador ... I have become impressed with the great opportunities for American participation in the economic development of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan.

The Sudan has made significant strides toward the achievement of peace, unity, and political stability. The next item on the Sudanese agenda is economic development. The Sudanese Government, under the leadership of President Nimeiri, realizes that the development of Sudan's untapped resources will require a large inflow of foreign capital, technology and production and marketing know-how. Recognizing the role that the private sector must play in such development, the Government has made great progress in creating an atmosphere conducive to mutually profitable investment.³⁶

This interplay between Sudan's domestic developments, the forces active in the Middle Eastern context, the African region, and the international community indicates that a newly emerging Sudanese identity had

developed, in part through the influence of foreign relations, and that these external linkages had consequences for domestic policy. This would make the responses from the PLO and the United States critically important to the developments at the domestic level. In-

deed, it makes developments in these contexts significant in proportion to their input, the manner in which that input is received internally and the net outcome in terms of gains and losses, however evaluated.

A closer examination of the developments in U.S.-Sudan relations before the Camp David accords is necessary to appreciate the Sudan's position on them. Following Nimeiri's visit to the United States, Representative Don Bonker (Washington) entered into the Congressional Record another document prepared by the embassy entitled "The Sudan: A Model for Peace and Development in Africa." Introducing the document, Congressman Bonker said:

Our country has recently been honored with a private visit from President Gaafar Mohamed Nimeiri of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, a man who has done much to reform his country and to lead it in actively undertaking the role of intermediating for peace within Africa and the Middle East. His visit has given many of us insight into his domestic achievements and his regional and international aspirations for peace and harmony. I believe we will do well to reflect on some of these, to see what meaning they hold for us in the United States, and to ponder over what we can do to assist this man and his nation achieve the human objectives they have set for themselves both in their own interest and in the interest of humanity at large.³⁷

Bonker emphasized Nimeiri's role as a peacemaker, both at home and in the region. He noted that Nimeiri was the first and had remained the only Arab leader to support the Second Sinai Agreement; that he had earlier invited all Sudanese Jewish citizens who had left in reaction to the Middle East conflict to return with the guarantee of full rights of citizenship; that under his leadership the Sudan had become a country that did not discriminate on any grounds, including race or religion; that the Sudan was the first Arab country to restore diplomatic relations with the United States after they had been broken following the Six-Day War in 1967; that he had exerted efforts to mediate the Eritrean conflict in Ethiopia; and that he had many times used his good offices to secure the release of Americans, Canadians, and Europeans who were detained by the

Eritreans.

Bonker also highlighted the threats to which President Nimeiri was exposed from both the extreme left and right, and the extent to which,

in cooperation with the moderate states in the region, he had defied the forces of extremism. The Sudan, he said, had joined with Saudi Arabia and Egypt in cooperation not only against the extremist forces in the area but also in united effort for economic and social development. "Prior to his visit to the United States, President Nimeiri met with King Khalid and President Sadat to consolidate this strategic cooperation ... to promote the principles which we in the United States share with these three countries."³⁸

The statement concluded with a plea for support and assistance to the Sudan: "I believe that many factors continue to make the Sudan a country we ought to look at with favor as our friend. It is the largest country in Africa, an Afro-Arab microcosm of the continent, centrally placed at the borders of eight countries, pursuing a domestic policy of social justice that has brought harmony to many diverse elements in the country, and determined to play a constructive role in promoting peace and understanding in the region and in the world.... For this fast achieving nation, time is of the essence and I believe it is time to act."

As a product of the president's visit, a U.S.-Sudan Business Council was established under the cochairmanship of Sudanese and American business leaders to foster cooperation between the two countries in private investment. The council was modeled after the U.S.-Egyptian Business Council and was given a broad mandate to explore areas of mutual cooperation and to recommend the legal and administrative reforms needed to create a climate conducive for foreign investment. The council met twice a year, alternating the venue between Khartoum and Washington, and did much to identify investment areas, even specific projects. It did not, however, go far enough to realize its aspirations before things began to shift in Sudan's domestic policies. The new direction in policy had a deleterious effect on foreign investment and international development cooperation.

Bilateral relations of an economic nature do not fully explain Sudan's stance on the Camp David accords. Arab countries with even closer economic ties with the United States took the hard line of the collective

Arab front. It is particularly noteworthy that the Sudan was the only Arab country to support the Camp David accords. The reasons behind this support had much to do with the special relations between Egypt and the Sudan and the close interconnections between their security needs. However, it also had to do with the Sudan's domestic policies

in the light of the Addis Ababa Agreement and their implications for the country's foreign policy. This was manifested in the process of policy formulation, the people involved in the decisionmaking, and the principles invoked in supporting the accords.

President Nimeiri was on his way to the United States for his second visit when the Camp David accords were concluded and signed. When he arrived in Washington, Nimeiri was asked whether he supported or opposed the accords. His vice president, Rasheed al-Tahir, who was also the minister of foreign affairs, formerly a leader of the Muslim Brothers, and a known Pan-Arabist, and his press advisor, Muhammad Mahjoub (also a Pan-Arabist), recommended and even drafted a press statement rejecting the accords. As minister of state for foreign affairs, I had preceded the president to Washington to help plan the visit. Supported by Omar Saleh Eissa, my successor as ambassador to the United States, I opposed the proposed statement. He and I believed that for President Nimeiri to reject openly what was in effect the most important accomplishment of the host president would have been a damaging discourtesy. After all, the Sudan enjoyed the admiration and support of the Western world and in particular the United States largely because of the peaceful manner in which the war in the South had been resolved. The experience of the negotiating process had made the country a force for moderation and peacemaking in the region. To reject the Camp David accords would be to contradict the principles that had served the cause of Sudan's foreign policy so effectively. We advised the president at least to defer judgment, to explain that he had just heard of the accords, that he would instruct his institutions to study the situation and make recommendations, and that he would then make his decision in the light of those studies after his return to the country. That was the line President Nimeiri took in his response to the press and to President Carter's request for support in their official talks.

The visit, like its predecessor, was a success. The main themes of the president's policy especially that of international development cooperation, remained the same, and were perhaps best articulated in his address to the U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce in Los Angeles on

September 25, 1978. This statement built on the results of his first visit. It is particularly remarkable in the way it postulates ideals that would later become pertinent to the development of Sudan's policy on the Camp David accords. The president noted that the principles that

guided and should guide Sudan's foreign relations are deeply rooted in domestic conditions. Clarifying those principles is therefore necessary to appreciating Sudan's foreign policy, regionally and internationally. Reducing these principles to two main features — first, peace and reconciliation, and second, accelerated economic and social development — he explained that the focus on those areas was dictated by the realities that had prevailed in the Sudan before the May Revolution. He then gave a historical background which, in the light of present conditions, makes history appear to have repeated itself:

Adversity was then the dominant theme in our diversity The country had suffered [seventeen] years of indecisive civil war between the North and the South. The North itself was torn apart by sectarianism and partisan factionalism. Scarce resources were depleted on destructiveness and the economic outcome was stagnation, if not retardation. The Sudan, which had always been projected as having an important role in linking the African and the Arab Worlds and in promoting regional peace and reconciliation, became an embarrassment in Afro-Arab relations and a land of hostilities.

Our priority was to bring an end to this state of affairs and reverse the trend. We moved fast to establish peace in our Southern region and in 1972 concluded the now famous Addis Ababa Accord ...

Motivated and strengthened by these domestic achievements, we began to move effectively as advocates of peace and reconciliation in our part of the world.³⁹

Nimeiri had an enormous personal stake in the decision to support the accords because the Western world in general and the United States in particular considered Nimeiri the driving force behind Sudan's remarkable achievements. That was the message he received from President Carter and other prominent Americans during his second visit to the United States.

Senator Dick Clark, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, said: "Sudan now stands as a model of reconciliation showing that

said. Sudan now stands as a model of reconciliation showing that political solutions are possible for the kinds of internal problems that confront many other nations. Muslim and Christian, Arab and African, are all accommodated in the Sudanese system. President Nimeiri

serves as an inspiration for all nations striving to overcome ethnic, racial or religious divisions that can be so destructive.... Both in bringing peace to his country and in pursuing an active role in world affairs, President Nimeiri has made his nation a vital bridge of communication spanning the world's cultures.”⁴⁰

Congressman Zablocki, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa, had this to say to and about President Nimeiri: “Your courageous efforts to end the civil war in your country have borne fruit; your agreement last month with members of the opposition in your country has furthered the process of national reconciliation. You have, in addition, made your constitution a living document, emphasizing respect for human rights, democracy and an independent judiciary.”⁴¹

President Carter, in his meeting with President Nimeiri, stressed the peacemaking role of the Sudan as grounds for his special appeal for Nimeiri to support the Camp David accords. Vice President Mondale and representatives of the Senate and House foreign relations committees later made the same appeal. The appeal reflected a request and an expression of a positive expectation based on the achievements and reputation of the Sudan, and it emphasized the importance of President Nimeiri's support. Egyptian president Anwar Sadat had been confident of a constructive evaluation by the Sudan and had added to rising American expectations of the crucial role the Sudan could play in promoting the results of Camp David.

Back in the Sudan, Nimeiri had to confront the critical question of whether he would support or oppose the Camp David accords. He had postponed the decision so that his institutions could study the situation and make recommendations. Virtually all the institutions—the army the National Security Agency the Socialist Union, the National Assembly and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs — favored solidarity with the rejectionist position of the Arab world. The president asked me to prepare an independent study with my own evaluation and recommendations. He used this report as the basis of his policy statement.

AS Sudan's support for the Camp David accords was perhaps the single most important basis for the close friendship with the United States, and because of its significance to the dual character of the postulated African-Arab Sudan, the president's statement deserves close examination.⁴² Of course, neither the statement nor the report on which it was based used domestic reconciliation as the sole basis for supporting the Camp David accords. Quite the contrary; much in the Middle

East situation justified support. The report and the statement began by posing a number of probing questions: After four successive wars in which the Arab cause had suffered more losses than gains, and considering the imperatives of the international situation, was negotiated peace not preferable to war as a means of achieving Arab objectives? If so, was it possible for the Arabs to achieve a negotiated settlement on the basis of predetermined principles that permitted no compromise or concession? Was a collective and uncompromising commitment to the details of the Arab strategy and to the achievement of all Arab objectives at one instance a realistic approach to a negotiated settlement? In view of the fact that the deterioration of the Arab position since 1948 had resulted in the pluralization of Arab demands, was it not understandable for the most affected Arab parties to aim at obtaining the achievable objectives as soon as possible as steps in the direction of the ultimate goals? Should it prove to be more in the interest of those with remote objectives to stand in the way of those with more achievable objectives, then did that in itself not imply a divergence or at least diversification of interests that could understandably lead to differences in the strategies of the respective parties?

On the basis of these rhetorical questions the president then laid out the grounds for his critique of the accords, the Arab response as reflected in all the institutional studies, and the respective positions of the ideological camps, particularly the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. For the purpose of this study, it is worth reproducing in some detail the statement's position on the particular role the Sudan was expected to play and should play as "a natural outcome of Sudan's domestic, regional and international orientation towards the cause of peace and peaceful ways of settling disputes, an orientation for which the Sudan ... has become known to the outside world."⁴³ The domestic rationale of the policy was therefore not the substantive content of the policy, but rather an additional catalyst. The pertinent question, however, is whether this catalyst, which made it possible for Sudan's policymakers to see the situation differently from other Arabs, could have been possible without the internal dynamics and the contribution of those to whom those dynamics were of pivotal importance.

The studies took a position based on the argument that the Sudan, as an Arab country, should follow the collective Arab stand. The reasons contrasted sharply with the reasons that based support for the Camp

David accords on domestic perspectives. The institutional studies made the following points: the Sudan had an unwavering commitment to the Arab objectives and strategies agreed on in the summits of Algiers and Rabat; the Sudan held the chairmanship of the Arab Solidarity Committee and had exerted great efforts for the restoration of a united Arab front; the Sudan had declared support for the cause of liberation, and the president's position as chairman of the Organization of African Unity presupposed a certain responsibility to follow up the implementation of the organizations decisions; the Sudan was committed to the instruments of the revolution and of international institutions as well as international agreements and treaties; the Sudan was also committed to the service of national and regional interests through such arrangements as the program of integration with Egypt and economic cooperation with other Arab countries.

Building on these principles and considerations, the institutional studies concluded with a negative evaluation of Camp David. They argued that while the Sudan had initially supported Sadat's initiative in the hope that it might be an alternative to the objectives of the Arabs, the initiative had proved a failure and had led to a dangerous division in the Arab world. The Sudan's role was therefore to work for the restoration of Arab unity and collective effort as the only guarantee for the achievement of Arab objectives. The studies acknowledged Camp David as a genuine effort for peace but concluded that its results did not achieve even the minimum requirements of the Arab demands. This accounted for its rejection by the majority of Arab countries and led to the exclusion of Egypt from the Arab cause, a development that deprived the Arab struggle of an element vital to the achievement of its objectives. The studies recommended an Arab summit to redefine new strategies that would effectively meet the challenge of the situation.

While the institutional studies considered impractical the suggestion of Iraq that the Sudan and Saudi Arabia mediate to bring President Sadat back to the Arab approach, they supported the Jordanian suggestion that the Sudan should persuade Sadat to postpone the signing of a peace agreement with Israel until after the Baghdad summit conference. The

studies thus conformed very closely to the Arab approach and viewed the Sudan's special role largely from the collective viewpoint of the Arab strategy.

My report, on which President Nimeiri based his statement, saw

Sudan's role from a different perspective. It stated that the Sudan had a more complex and positive role than the standard role of the collective Arab strategy. That role emanated from Sudan's internal situation and achievements, especially in harmonizing diversities through negotiation, conciliation, and accommodation. Those achievements had not only transformed Sudan's domestic situation into one of peace, unity, and constructive preoccupation with development, but had also conditioned the country to play an active role for peace and stability in the region. The Sudan was able to move in African, Arab, and other international circles and to play the long-postulated role of bridge in a more effective way than had been possible when it had been torn apart by racial, cultural, religious, and political tensions and conflicts. The president added his own words, paraphrasing the original report where references to his personal role and the way he was perceived abroad were too embarrassing for him to use verbatim:

It is from this premise that we decide our policies and not as a result of being led by the collective Arab stand. Instead we should take the lead. We should not be too rigid. We should not freeze our positions. I urge all our citizens to read the magazines and newspapers that are published abroad in order to appreciate the image of the Sudan abroad. The Sudan is this nation which has succeeded in solving the problems of national unity and has planned for social and economic development. The Sudan has gone further to assist brothers and neighbours to solve their own national problems. This is the Sudan we want to take a strong and courageous stand, a Sudan which reflects and decides on its own national grounds and not on the basis of foreign positions.⁴⁴

With respect to the positions of the superpowers, the statement, now reverting to the original report, unequivocally endorsed the role the United States was playing in mediating the Middle East conflict:

Considering that the crucial choice with respect to Camp David is either support for peaceful alternatives to the conflict or the perpetuation and likely intensification of the military confrontation, there is little doubt that the United States of America is more committed to the former while the

Soviet Union backs the latter.... Both as a matter of commitment to principles and as a matter of gaining more appreciation of Sudan's constructive role in

the area and therefore winning support for this role, we should take a position that reflects the reality of our situation, a reality for which we should be prepared to sacrifice, if need be, knowing that in the long run, moderation, conciliation, and constructive efforts will prevail.”⁴⁵

Sudan's support for the Camp David accords was not without qualifications or reservations. The statement made it clear that while following the line of support for the positive aspects of Camp David, the Sudan must continue to criticize the negative aspects constructively and work to improve the peace process that had been set in motion. The United States in particular should be made to realize the full responsibility it had assumed for peace in the Middle East. Unless Israel showed considerable cooperation or was made to be more positively responsive, the reaction of the extremists would be justified and the cause of peace retarded to the detriment of the parties involved, the United States included. In his delivery both to the politburo and to the nation, the president was very effective in making his case for Sudan's support of the Camp David accords. Even those who opposed the policy received his statement favorably. Ironically the ambassador of Egypt intimated to me in my capacity as minister of state for foreign affairs that even Egypt could not have made as strong a statement in defense of the accords. Another member of the politburo praised the statement but expressed the suspicion that it had probably been prepared by Egyptian sources or by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency the CIA.⁴⁶ He could not see anyone around the president who could have written such a statement. In contrast, Abel Alier, the vice president of the republic and president of the Southern Region, who favored the line of reasoning adopted in the statement from the perspective of the South, intimated that he saw my shadow behind the president's statement. Camp David was thus an instance in which southern policy had a direct effect on an important foreign policy decision.

SHIFTING DOMESTIC GROUNDS

Despite President Nimeiri's pronounced commitment to the domestically rooted principles of foreign policy internal developments worked to reverse those principles gradually. This was due in part to political

pressures from the right-wing opposition and from the focused use of petrodollars from Arab countries to promote the Arab-Islamic agenda in the Sudan.

The abortive rightist coup of 1976 forced Nimeiri to make compromises that planted the seeds of what would eventually trigger a fundamental change of policy. Nimeiri was shaken and insecure, especially as he was unable to negotiate the extradition of the opposition leader, Sadiq al-Mahdi, who had been tried and sentenced to death in absentia.⁴⁷ Sadiq remained free and secure in foreign lands, vowing that he would try again. Nimeiri was truly frustrated by his inability to get at Sadiq al-Mahdi, but only a year after the abortive coup, he surprised the nation by announcing that he had reached an agreement with Sadiq al-Mahdi. That agreement opened doors for the involvement of the opposition groups in the May government and the systematic derailing of the revolution toward Arab-Islamic fundamentalism, which contravened the principles of the Addis Ababa Agreement and triggered the resumption of hostilities in North-South relations. But the policy shift was a process that would invade the system from within, subtly eroding the foundation of North-South reconciliation that the Addis Ababa Agreement built.

Although the reconciliation between Nimeiri and Sadiq al-Mahdi that brought the opposition groups into the government could have been a constructive broadening of consensus, it set in motion processes that were alienating to the South. Among the people who criticized the president's policy of reconciliation and even left the government was Minister of Culture and Information Bona Malwal. Malwal saw the involvement of these rightist elements in the government and other institutions of the May Revolution as the beginning of a reversal of the conciliatory policies toward the South. He later wrote, "Rather than becoming a healer of old wounds, which President Nimeiri obviously intended national reconciliation to be, it seems to have had the opposite effect. Such issues as multipartisanship, sectarianism and the official religion of the state, with Islam being regarded by some as an inseparable part of national politics, have re-emerged. Many had thought and hoped that the country had left behind it all these old and traditional

slogans. They have now again become matters of heated public debate.”⁴⁸

Abel Alier, Nimeiri's vice president, who also headed the regional government in the South, later wrote:

Reconciliation might be praiseworthy but doing it at the expense of the South and at the expense of North-South unity, was ignoble....

The parties which had now come under the umbrella of NF [National Front opposition group] had specific policies on the South long before the May Revolution. They were opposed to:

- (i) one Southern Region, preferring instead three regions as the latter arrangement provided a greater potential opportunity to play one region against the other;
- (ii) a secular constitution, preferring to opt for an Islamic constitution;
- (iii) security arrangements agreed at Addis Ababa and incorporated in the Regional Self-Government Act of 1972 which they saw as potentially capable of providing substantial political power to the South;
- (iv) selection of head of the Southern Region by the people in the South, preferring the selection to be the responsibility of the head of the central government. It was also without question that under their proposed constitution the head of state would be a Muslim, thus excluding most Southerners from aspiring to the Presidency of the Sudan. The objective was to put a constitutional stamp on the present practice whereby all senior positions in the state bureaucratic structure are held by people from one region of the country;
- (v) financial relations between the regions and the central government which aimed at strengthening the economic position of the regions. The objections were in effect inherent in the Port Sudan reconciliation agreement of 1977 between Nimeiri and Saddiq El Mahdi, representing the National Front.⁴⁹

According to Abel Alier, the National Front, in particular the Muslim Brothers, gave President Nimeiri two distinct impressions, which contributed to his ultimate abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement. One was that he would get full support from the political forces in the North if he could review and effect substantial changes in the agreement.

which they thought weakened national sovereignty. The

other was that if Nimeiri introduced an Islamic constitution, he would be certain to go down in history as the greatest Sudanese leader and would regain the following of the bulk of the people of the northern Sudan.⁵⁰

In the words of Mansour Khalid, "The so-called National Reconciliation ... had had little beneficial effect on the South. Indeed, in the long term, the return to public life of several politicians of reaction, thought to have been consigned to an irretrievable past only a few years ago, was injurious both to Southern and national interests."⁵¹

Nimeiri's image in foreign circles remained positive even as the foundations of his southern policy were being eroded. His favorable image abroad became increasingly divorced from his domestic record. As a result of Nimeiri's support of the Camp David accords, which, though significantly rooted in his domestic policies, was known to be almost personal, his relations with the United States grew even closer. More than ever before, the Sudan, because of Nimeiri, was viewed as an important strategic ally of the West, third after Israel and Egypt as a recipient of U.S. aid.

The country suffered a hostile reaction to its Camp David stance from the Arab world, however. Arab financial support stopped, and the threats of terrorism, especially from Iraq, mounted. So severe was the Arab reaction and its impact on the situation that Nimeiri at times wavered in his position behind the Camp David accords, interpreting his position elastically depending on the context and the audience. So equivocal did Nimeiri become that he withdrew his ambassador to Egypt in 1979 under the guise of appointment to another government position.⁵²

However, the consistent appreciation and strong support Nimeiri received from the United States depended largely on his support for the Camp David accords combined with his anticommunist stance. U.S. support for Nimeiri as a friend and an ally became personalized and increasingly divorced from the ideals that had given him and his regime a positive image in the first place. Eventually all that counted for Nimeiri was not the pursuance of those domestic ideals, but his hostility to Ethiopia's Marxist

Mengistu and Libya's anti-west Qaddafi, and this constituted Nimeiri's base for winning the friendship and cooperation of the United States. The more dependent he became on the United States, and the less committed to the ideals of his domestic agenda, the more unpopular he grew inside his own country.

In a congressional hearing on March 28, 1984, Howard Wolpe, the presiding chairman of the House Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, said: "In recent years, Sudan has received between 20 and 25 percent of all American aid to Africa. And about one-third of U.S. security assistance to Africa which is supposed to bolster the political stability of friendly countries. Yet, it appears to many observers that despite massive American, IMF, World Bank, and Arab assistance, the Sudanese political structure is increasingly shaky and verging toward a state of civil war."⁵³

While some congressional leaders expressed guarded concern about the amount and use of U.S. aid money going to the Sudan, they remained supportive of Nimeiri's regime. Although its days were numbered — the uprising that eventually overthrew Nimeiri was only a year away — Noel C. Kotch, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense, made an assessment of the situation that was astonishingly positive and optimistic. "Sudan has a relatively stable government, has major economic potential, is politically moderate, and remains Western oriented. President Nimeiri has been favorable to U.S. objectives in the Middle East, Horn of Africa, and Africa generally (e.g., support of Camp David accords, support of Egypt, a positive role in the OAU, peacemaking efforts in the Western Sahara, thwarting Libya in Chad). The U.S. and the Sudan share common views on a wide variety of global and regional issues, and Sudan supports U.S. efforts to counter Soviet and Libyan influence in the area."⁵⁴

Ironically despite Nimeiri's unpopularity in the Arab world and lack of official financial support, the Sudan had become inextricably and dependent on Arab petrodollars from a variety of unofficial sources, which were promoting the Arab-Islamic identity of the country at the popular level. Statistics about the amounts of money from Arab circles are unverifiable and therefore difficult to compare with what accrued from the United States and other sources. The combined flow from Arab sources was far more substantial than from the West, however. For the Sudanese, this flow was justified by their identity as fellow Arabs and Muslims. Whether the money was conceived as investment or as aid, the Sudanese felt that it was a family affair. The Arabs' perception differed

markedly.

Arab petrodollars supported the Sudan through official and informal (private) channels. The official, government-to-government channel began to dry up after Nimeiri announced his Camp David policy.

An informal and private method funneled money into the country through Muslim fundamentalist and pan-Arab organizations committed to the Arab-Islamic trend in the Sudan, making it difficult to monitor. Another private source that was difficult to monitor and which also favored the Arab-Islamic trend came from remittances by Sudanese employed in the Persian Gulf countries. Whether these people were initially inclined toward the Arab-Islamic trend or subsequently influenced by their working climate, they ended up channeling their financial resources through institutional avenues favorable to the cause of Arabism and Islam. Despite the diversity of channels and objectives, Arab petrodollars have had a significant effect on the domestic symbols of national identity, the interests associated with them, and their implications for Sudan's foreign policy.

The political faction that has benefited most from these external sources in a consolidated, sustainable way has been the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood), now the National Islamic Front, whose mission has been multifaceted: to fight communism; to seize political power, especially from the rival sectarian parties; and to establish an Islamic state in the Sudan as a first step toward promoting the cause of Islam in Africa and the Middle East.

It is not clear whether the Arab Muslim sources of funding abroad were initially motivated to finance the spread of Islam in the Sudan and Africa or were merely seeking investment opportunities that the National Islamic Front has cleverly manipulated and redirected toward serving both objectives. If the experience of the National Islamic Front with the petrodollars from the Gulf states is taken as only an aspect of a broader picture in which the oil-rich countries were seeking to recycle their wealth through international banking, then there is reason to believe that the expectations of the foreign investor and the domestic recipients may not be identical. While the Sudanese expected their Arab-Islamic identity to be a basis for attracting Arab petrodollars, the intention of the Arab financier was more in the direction of business investment than in the promotion of Arabism or Islam. However, the two have coincided and have become mutually reinforcing.

Bona Malwal, as minister of information, was closely associated with Arab investment in the Sudan. He felt that the Sudanese were laboring under a misconception if they thought that by emphasizing their Arab-Islamic identity they could appeal to Arab investors and

attract their petrodollars. In that vein, they considered themselves more Arab than they were or needed to be and over projected themselves as having a special role to play in promoting Islam in Africa:

Throughout the period I was in the central government and in the Ministry of Culture and Information, if anything, one detected a certain degree of unease in the Arab world when the issue of the Arab or the Islamic identity of the Sudan was played up in these economic discussions. The Arabs wanted to separate their religious or racial affinity with the Sudan from their economic interest in the country. Even though in the later years of the Nimeiri period, the Islamic and therefore the Arab angle gained an upper hand as an economic tool in the hands of the people in the Sudanese government, it was more a question of a people selling themselves on those particular points. The benefits that came from the religious and the cultural angles did not benefit the central treasury, but rather the National Islamic Front (NIF), for which they were a very effective political tool from 1977 to 1983. What they did with their time was to build not only the internal, political machinery for themselves, but also the economic arm of their party.... So, the mixing of politics, religion, culture and economics was something more domestic, more Sudanese, than external. In fact, I cannot think of one instance when an Arab investor, or an Arab government, has given capital to the central treasury of the Sudan in order to make a domestic political influence.⁵⁵

On the specific issue of the Sudanese thinking that they would make themselves attractive to the Arab world on racial, cultural, and religious ideological grounds rather than because of purely economic considerations, Bona Malwal observed:

We were always mindful of our Arab identity as a way of promoting ourselves.... We always felt that if we, by which I mean the people who were making decisions in this process, identified ourselves as Muslims and Arabs, more capital would flow in. So, there is no denying that we became hostages of our own ideological tilt, and we linked it to our economic decisions, and our economic behavior.

So many times when there was some little economic activity that we wanted to undertake, the first thing people thought of was

... that we could always go to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and plead in the name of Arabism and Islam or in the name of the “breadbasket,” and we would get the money.

I would not put percentages as to what extent our Arab identity shifted east, to the Gulf, because of the financial involvement that they had. But it was a considerable degree, I would say. We definitely had become almost beholden.... So, I would say yes, our Arab attitude was much more molded by our economic considerations than by anything else.⁵⁶

What these observations indicate is that Arab identity in the Sudan is a much stronger aspiration in the Sudan than it is within the Arab world — the Sudanese “Arabs” desperate to belong; the other Arabs not all that keen to have them, or perhaps to be equally preoccupied with them. This imbalance may have something to do with an extremism of emotions that underlies the revivalist or fundamentalist trend in the Sudan and possibly other areas that are marginal to the core Arab-Islamic identity in its composite racial, cultural, and religious mold.

An even more ambivalent linkage with the Arab world has been the influx of the Sudanese labor force, including a significant brain drain into the Gulf states.⁵⁷ While these immigrants are clearly motivated by economic considerations, there is no doubt that they have tended to take advantage of their identity as Arabs and Muslims. However driven by purely economic considerations the Gulf states are in welcoming them, this racial, cultural, and religious affinity has certainly not been insignificant. And yet, Sudanese who have lived in the Gulf states have been deeply disappointed by the racist treatment they have experienced at the hands of their fellow Arabs based on their black skin color, even though they perceive themselves as racially and culturally Arab and even though Islam is supposed to be color-blind. Nevertheless, the economic imperatives make them endure and pocket their Sudanese pride with humility that is uncharacteristic.

A LEGACY OF THE MAY REVOLUTION

The foregoing account of the May revolution makes clear that the

revolution opened doors to the Gulf states on the basis of identification with the Arab world. It was also a quite exceptional period in the way

it brought the Sudanese people together with a remarkable unity of identity and purpose.

The testimony of the principal individuals involved in conceptualizing and administering the system is insightful. Bona Malwal's recollections as minister of culture and information are illuminating, particularly as they stress the role of southerners in shaping a more balanced Arab-African policy both domestically and internationally.

National policy has always been characterized by what have largely been lip-service labels. So the question of an Afro-Arab, an Arab or an African Sudan was always something any government would pronounce without giving much attention to the content of the policy and its implementation. What happened during the period in which we were in the government is that some of us took seriously the content of these policies and therefore gave them practical meaning.... And as long as I was in the Ministry of Culture and Information, I gave my interpretation to the Sudanese culture in terms of its Arab, Islamic, African and non-Islamic content, and this was carried out under my supervision and nobody questioned my guidance.

What happened after we left and others came was that what we had tried to do and which had brought a balance that had put the country in its true middle course, became the target of those who wanted to tilt it to the Arab or the Islamic side.

The things that we tried to do were erased almost instantly after we left the Government. In the Ministry of Culture and Information, for instance, I had an annual cultural festival in which we would honor poets, artists, writers from both south and north, from both the African and the Arab elements.... You know our folklore program in which all corners of the Sudan were represented. We had gone to a stage where you found dancers from Northern Sudan singing songs of the tribes in southern Sudan and dancing Southern dances and vice versa. All this was removed almost within the week I left. And they are no more. During my time, nobody would start the news with a Koranic recitation; this is now

the case. It is a reversal of a work of seven, eight, or ten years, just wiped away. It really brings us to the question we have always discussed — the use of power. The management of power

is the core of the problem in the Sudan. It is not the identity of its people; it is who keeps power and does not want to give all the people of the Sudan their true identity and their right to expression. This is the essence of the problem.⁵⁸

In arguing that it is a matter not of identity but of power, Bona Malwal was in fact drawing attention to the manipulation of identity symbols by those in power and the inequitable distribution of power, wealth, and other values among the different identity groups which make the difference. In his case, he did not discriminate among Sudan's varied identities, while his successors clearly did.

Mansour Khalid, one of the principal insiders, who was in charge of Sudan's foreign relations during most of the May Revolution, echoed Bona Malwal's observations, but with due recognition for the identity factor:

The promotion of the Sudanese personality that emerged following the Addis Ababa Agreement was ... a deliberate effort to reflect all the aspects of the Sudanese culture starting from the Nubian civilization and beyond as well as such efforts as the establishment of the National Museum and the Folklore Troupe.... The post-Addis Ababa period ushered in a Sudanese renaissance reflected in many things that people take for granted today. Among the latter was the concern of the regime towards Sudanese customs and the opening of the Sudanese Museum, the Nubian archives, the care to endow a significant status to the Nubian Christian Kingdom, the promotion of Sudanese folklore.⁵⁹

The way in which the National Islamic Front and indeed the Sudanese leadership have since sought to exploit the Arab-Islamic connection to promote their domestic religious, economic, and political agendas is reminiscent of the original manner in which the Arab Muslim immigrants effected Arabization and Islamization through trade and economic incentives.

Externally generated financial and economic sources of influence have not only reinforced the symbols of identity desired by outside interests

not only reinforced the symbols of identity desired by outside interests, but by so doing have also generated divisive rivalry within the country. The emergence of the National Islamic Front as an economic and political force is the latest phase in a continuing process and one that is perhaps more dramatically divisive because of the

strong forces confronting it from the parallel secularist trend in the country and particularly in the South.

With the resumption of hostilities, the linkage between the domestic and external symbols of identity has been divisively heightened. This was particularly manifested in December 1987, when the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) attacked and captured the northern towns of Kurmuk and Gissan in Southern Blue Nile province. As Peter Woodward explained, this "provoked two very adverse sentiments as far as the SPLA's aim by creating a national movement was concerned."⁶⁰ One was that the extension of the war into the North was seen as qualitatively different from fighting in the South. While fighting in the South was "unfortunate" but "politically tolerable" fighting in the North was "unacceptable." As a result, "There was a wave of jingoistic hysteria ... accompanied by open discussion of the necessity of dividing Sudan, essentially secession of the larger part, the North."⁶¹ A second and related theme was the dichotomy between Arab and African sentiments of identity that emerged in the northern responses expressed in appeals to Arab-Islamic states for military support, to which Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Iran responded. "The talk of a 'Sudanese' identity and its Afro-Arab character appeared in danger of being swamped under a deluge of gut Arabism and Islamism, under attack from the African unbelievers of dar al-harb (the lands of war beyond the Islamic community)."⁶²

Whereas the link with the outside world was in the past mostly between the government and Arab countries, committed to the support and promotion of Arabism and Islam, today many African countries have become increasingly aware of the conditions of injustice and indignity that the non-Arab population of the Sudan, particularly in the South, suffers, and they are becoming more supportive of the Sudanese struggle under the leadership of the SPLM-SPLA. African support has brought about a degree of parity in the conflict, which makes the war more destructive but also improves the prospects for a just and lasting settlement. However, with developments in the region — the ouster of Mengistu, who was the most committed supporter of the SPLM-SPLA; the victory of the

Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), with the help of the Sudanese government; the internal division within the SPLM-SPLA; the involvement of new actors such as Iran and China; and the overall diplomatic maneuvers of the Sudan in the region — this

parity is precarious. Nonetheless, the grievances of the South and the commitment to self-liberation are too deep rooted to be dampened by short-term tactical advantages that do not address the causes of the problems. Besides, the opposition groups under the rubric of NDA — the National Democratic Alliance — are also engaged in procuring regional and international support for their cause. The outcome for all concerned cannot, therefore, be easily predicted.

Clearly the linkage between the domestic symbols of identity and external relations can be divisive and negative or uniting and constructive. Much of the history of relations between the North and the South reveals a negative and divisive linkage, but the relatively peaceful period of the Addis Ababa Agreement represented a coming together that made it possible for the Sudan to effectively play its long-postulated role of Afro-Arab moderator and dynamic link between Africa and the Middle East. Judging from its subsequent demise, however, the accord certainly did not enjoy a national consensus, and especially the support of the Muslim right. Nevertheless, most Sudanese would agree in retrospect that the period of the Addis Ababa Agreement represented a golden era in North-South relations. Whether the country will once again be able to achieve, retain, and improve on that golden period will depend on the prospects for a just resolution to the North-South conflict, which has proliferated and is now spreading to the other marginalized non-Arab regions of the North. Given the commitment to the Arab-Islamic agenda in the North, which, though spearheaded by the NIF and the present military rule of Omar Ahmed Hassan al-Bashir, is more broadly based, the prospects for another Addis Ababa-type reconciliation between the North and the South seem very remote indeed. The real question is how this stalemate will translate itself regionally and internationally and how the lines of external support or arbitration between the conflicting identities will be drawn.

PART 6 The Crisis in Perspective

Chapter 10 Boundaries of Identity

In Sudan ethnicity is relevant to the definition of Arab-Islamic identity and to the application of that identity in the national sphere. Ethnicity also plays a part in the Arab-African dualism of the country and in the North-South conflict. This chapter develops several of the interrelated themes that determine identity. First, it recognizes that identity is basically a subjective concept. It is what people perceive themselves to be that principally establishes who or what they are. Second, it maintains that an important element of such subjective identification, insofar as ethnic identity is concerned, is blood related. In the Sudan, this associates the concept of Arabism with race. Third, it argues that recognizing identity (including its blood or racial component) as subjective does not mean that it cannot be challenged by objective facts or criteria. One's personal identification may be in sharp conflict with what one actually is by the application of established standards. And fourth, the chapter asserts that if an exclusive identity conflicts with the requirements of national unity in a framework of diverse identities, then the identity must be redefined to be all inclusive, a framework that accommodates the diversities must be designed, or the diverse parts go their separate ways. These issues are then applied to the case of the Sudan with a view to determining prevailing self-perceptions, what they entail in racial, cultural, and religious terms; how justified by objective criteria they are; and whether or not they provide a framework for unity or justify alternative arrangements. The alternatives range from a national unity that embraces diversity to partition of the country.

ISSUES IN THE DEFINITION OF IDENTITY

As stated earlier, identity is perceived for the purpose of this study as a concept of how people define themselves and are defined by others on the bases of race, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion. In situa-

tions where the nation or the country is defined with reference to the racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious identity of a dominant group, whether a majority or a ruling minority these factors do become bases for discrimination. And although constitutional provisions and other legal instruments might prohibit discrimination, as long as the framework is defined in terms that exclude, subordinate, or marginalize those who do not fit the definition of the nation, discrimination becomes inherent. How the country or the nation is defined or conceived is therefore critical to the status of the citizens. The way to guarantee equality among citizens is either to exclude from the definition of the national framework those factors of identity that provide bases for discrimination or to define identity in terms that are inclusive.

Seen in that light, in the Sudan, a country that is defined in terms that connote race, ethnicity culture, or religion, there is no way discrimination can be avoided. The competing identity models are Arabism, Africanism, Islam, Christianity, and traditional religions. Arabism, defined in racial and cultural terms, and Islam, crystallized in sharia, which in Islamic doctrine is a comprehensive way of life embracing public and private domains, are clearly the dominant models. While a person can be converted to Islam and assimilated into Arabism by speaking the Arabic language and adopting Arab culture, one cannot be fully equal as an Arab without genetic or genealogical claims that are visibly authentic. Claims to Arabism, even in the genealogical sense, are frequent among people whose appearance betrays the predominance of African blood. In such cases, one may be accepted as Arab, but, in cases involving an obvious black origin, also socially recognized as marginal and suspected of some association with a slave background. In some cases, the slave background may be known. Whether it is known or suspected, such a background relegates a person who is otherwise a full citizen to an inferior status, which can bar marriage into families of known standing unless, of course, one compensates through such accomplishments as education, wealth, or political status.

From the perspectives of the dominant northern models of identification, these hard facts tend to be clouded with theoretical, often politically

motivated discussion of the concept of identity to make northern self-identification with Arabism seem more benign and less racist. The gist of these intellectual maneuvers is the agreement that Arabism is a cultural and not a racial concept. Although this argument is widely

used in the Arab world, it is particularly appealing to the Sudanese Arabs whose features look more black African than Arab. The argument itself is more of theoretical value than it is a reflection of prevailing attitudes. Evidence from interviews shows that Sudanese in the Arab world invariably experience discrimination as black Africans, and, even when their claim to Arabism is established by their national identification and by their speaking Arabic, those facts merely mitigate rather than eliminate discrimination.

The issue involved in the particular case of the Sudan is whether what a person believes himself or herself to be racially or ethnically is what counts, even if it is not supported by visible genetic or physical evidence, or whether such self-perception, in order to be valid, must conform with the features normally associated with such racial or ethnic claims. Where the discrepancies are minor and hardly noticeable, the issue poses no serious difficulty or problems. Also, where such claims are personal and carry no consequences for others, no problem arises from a misplaced or distorted self-image. But where the gap is visible between what is claimed and what is accepted as standard, or where significant social consequences from the claims fall on others, the matter cannot be considered purely personal.

The situation in the Sudan is one in which the claims by individuals to be Arab are collectivized into a national claim to Arabism, which inevitably impinges on the status of those who do not qualify as Arabs. The issue then for the excluded is whether to allow the individuals and the collective claim to Arabism in the name of the nation to pass unchallenged. This type of acceptance would relegate some to an inferior status and indeed exclude them from the national identity. They could, however, contest the claim as not reflective of the country, either in the genetic composition of the claimants or in the racial or ethnic configuration of the country as a whole.

The resistance of the non-Arabs and in particular the southern Sudanese to the imposition of Arabism takes two forms. One is to challenge the bases of the claim to Arabism, to argue that the northern Sudanese are

not really the Arabs they claim to be, that the African element is dominant even in the North, and that the Sudan should therefore be regarded as primarily African or at least as an Arabized African country. This approach is predicated on unity in a newly defined Sudan. The other is to accept northerners for the Arabs they claim to be, to argue that there is therefore nothing in common between the Arab

North and the African South, and that under those circumstances, there is no basis for the nation-state the Sudan claims to be. This argument essentially favors a separatist solution to the crisis.

This clear delineation of the issues tends to be blurred by the literature on ethnicity, which reflects some ambiguity between recognizing objective criteria for determining ethnic identity and taking subjective claims to any identity as the determining factor. Logically this would mean that anyone who claims to be a member of any race or ethnicity should be accepted as such, whatever the discrepancy between the claim and the appearance. Where the discrepancy is too apparent, as is the case with the Sudanese claim to Arabism, the situation becomes somewhat incongruous and must be rationalized in other ways. Hence the need to highlight factors such as the role of language and culture that would bridge the gap. The Sudanese can then say that since they speak Arabic and are culturally Arabized, they are Arabs, however black they may look.

Imagine a case where European immigrants go to a country in significant numbers but are not the majority. They intermarry or otherwise procreate with the local population, in due course producing a class of mixed race with privileges pertaining to the status of their original European ancestors. Assume that by virtue of the advantages and privileges accruing to them, they predominate over the local population and become the ruling elite. Assume also that the country becomes independent under the leadership of this group, whose skin color and features represent an intermediate model between the European and indigenous standards. They call themselves Europeans because they speak the language of their ancestors, have adopted their cultural ways, are Christian, and maintain close connections with Europe. They want their country to be considered European, and they also want their people, including the indigenous population, to identify themselves as European. They argue that being European does not have to be racial, but cultural.

There are countries in the world where part of this hypothetical story is experienced, with the exception that they do not make as close an

identification with Europe as the Sudan makes with the Arab world. Even countries where the majority of the population has close ethnic and cultural affinity with Europe — the Americas, Australia, or New Zealand, for example — do not identify themselves as European, but instead take pride in their national identity. The absurdity of the hypo-

thetical case becomes even more pronounced if applied to situations where the color of skin or physical characteristics of the dominant minority population reflects an obvious gap between the claims and the realities of the majority. These examples illustrate the ambiguities of recognizing some objective yardstick for measuring ethnically based national identity and accepting at face value any claims to nationally defined ethnic belonging, especially in a pluralistic context.

DETERMINANTS OF IDENTITY

Anthropological literature usually identifies as indicators of ethnicity the following group characteristics: it is largely self-perpetuating biologically; it shares fundamental cultural values, overtly realized in a unity of cultural forms; it is a matrix of communication and interaction; and it has a membership that identifies itself, and is identified by others, as distinguishable from other categories of the same order.¹ The definition supports “the traditional proposition that a race = a culture = a language and that a society = a unit which rejects or discriminates against others. Yet, in its modified form it is close enough to many empirical ethnographic situations, at least as they appear and have been reported, so that this meaning continues to serve the purposes of most anthropologists.”²

While these criteria are accepted as objective indicators, scholars generally recognize self-identification with a particular group as the crucial determinant of identity. As Crawford Young put it, “In the final analysis, identity is a subjective, individual phenomenon; it is shaped through the constantly recurrent question to ego, ‘Who am I?’ with its inevitable corollary, ‘Who is we?’ Generalized to the collectivity, these become, ‘Who are we?’ and ‘Who are they?’”³ Young qualifies the element of subjectivity by noting that “subjective identity itself is affected by the labels applied by others.”⁴ These labels may become internalized and accepted as part of the subjective sense of self. But as Young himself implies, there is more to the objective factors than their effect on subjectivity: “Although identity is subjective, multiple, and situationally fluid, it is not infinitely elastic. Cultural properties of the individual do constrain the possible range of choice of social identities. Physical

appearance is the most indelible attribute; where skin pigmentation serves to segment communities, only a handful of persons

at the color margins may be permitted any choice of identity on racial lines.”⁵ It thus becomes crucially important to recognize both how people identify themselves in terms of ethnicity and race and the degree to which that identification tallies with the objective facts. The discrepancy between subjectivity and objectivity is more manifest in ethnicity, based as it is on verifiable attributes that may include language, territory political unit, or common value systems. Race, which breeds ‘racism,’ the “stepchild of prejudice,” is “based ... on conspicuous physical differentiation ... which facilitates the stereotyping process.”⁶ Applying this last standard, any claim by Sudanese to Arab race can only be valid for a negligible few. And yet, race is one of the factors that the northern Sudanese use in their overwhelming identification with Arabism.

Nelson Kasfir broadens the concept of ethnicity to encompass “all forms of identity that have at their root the notion of a common ancestor-race as well as ‘tribe.’”⁷ This definition permits ethnic identification with an Arab ancestor, but if the race factor predominates in favor of the African ancestor, then identification with the Arab ancestor becomes dubious. Kasfir goes even further in stretching the concept of ethnicity in a way that could allow the northern Sudanese to pass as Arab by linking religion and region with ancestor-race and ethnicity. Although quite different from ethnicity, according to Kasfir, religion and region are “sometimes also taken as stereotypical indicators of common ancestry”⁸ But even Kasfir restricts the realm of subjectivity. After observing that individuals usually have multiple identities from which to choose, he adds that the choice “depends on the particular situation, not merely on the individual's preference.”⁹ Kasfir, however, concludes with an emphasis on personal choice: “Though objective ethnic characteristics (race, language, culture, place of birth) usually provide the possible limits, subjective perception of either the identities or the identified — whether objectively accurate or not — may turn out to be decisive for the social situation.”¹⁰ But the subjective factor implies assumptions of accuracy about objective indicators, such as assertive identification with a racial or ethnic origin or culture, which may or may not be supported by objective evidence. Kasfir's analysis leaves one wondering where, by his criteria, one would place the Sudanese claim to be Arabs.

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This argument dismisses as irrelevant subjective claims pertaining to race or other blood-oriented affinities, largely because they cannot

be verified. Instead, the claim of identity applies only to the objective indicators, disregarding less credible or more incongruous aspects even when they are central to the subjective view of the person or the group concerned. The credible indicators are by implication then postulated as the pertinent criteria underlying the subjective claims. Northern Sudanese who claim to be Arabs are thus presented as doing so on the basis not of the obviously untenable grounds of race, blood, or color, but rather on the more plausible grounds of culture, language, and religion — Islam — which, in the Sudan, are associated with Arabism.¹¹ The underlying, differentiating sentiments of race, which breed contemptuous pride, prejudice, and discrimination, are thereby evaded and exonerated by dismissal or benign neglect.

The major reason behind this tendency is of course the difficulty, if not impossibility, of ascertaining the facts about a claim to a racial identity. In a situation in which Darwinian biological assumptions and related fictions of race and ethnicity have been used to target groups, subjecting them to the type of mass degradation and victimization that Nazi Germany visited upon the Jews, the gypsies, and others, the understandable response is to explode the myths of objectivity, perceiving race and ethnicity as flexible tools likely to be used for evil and therefore not worthy of credible attention. This analysis disregards the fact that people entertain sentiments of racial or ethnic identification, however unreliable the evidence for such identification, and that dismissing the issue as insignificant condones it.

Presumably for these reasons (and others), an influential trend in the scholarly community sees self-identification with race and ethnicity not as phenomena to be supported or invalidated by objective evidence, but rather as a means used by groups and individuals to compete more effectively for resources and state benefits. Ironically scholars recognize this danger as a significant political tool. A group of social scientists studying the relationship between politics and society in Africa concluded that ethnicity is seen as a subjective belief in a common origin, historical memories, ties, and aspirations.¹² An ethnic group is perceived as pertaining to organized activities by persons who are linked by their

consciousness of a special identity, jointly seeking to maximize their corporate, political, economic, and social interests: "The validity of these beliefs and remembrances is of less significance to an overarching sense of affinity than is their ability to symbolize a people's closeness to one another. Ethnicity as a subjective

basis for collective consciousness gains relevance to the political process when it spurs group formation and underpins political organizations The subjective dimension of peoplehood [and] ... the objective dimension of economic and social interests” are joined in this view of an ethnic group.¹³

The emphasis on the subjective factor in the analysis is valid as a diagnosis, but not as an irrefutable fact-situation, for the basis of such subjectivity can be questioned and discredited by visible evidence, as is indeed the case in the Sudan. The crucial factor, however, is not merely identification, but its implications for participation and distribution, what the authors call “the objective dimension of economic and social interests.” Indeed, the cause of the problem becomes not the subjective claims and the degree to which they are objectively valid or false, but the supposed manipulation of those claims by the political elite. Ethnicity is seen as important in African politics because it serves as an “organizing principle of social action,” which makes it “basically a political ... phenomenon.”¹⁴

The subjective factor also has a positive element because its flexibility permits the possibility of constructively reshaping self-identification as a means of resolving or ameliorating conflict between identity groups. All people, according to the authors of the abovementioned study, have multiple identities, and the one that is most salient at any moment is “viewed situationally — in terms of the social, economic, and political contexts in which the various groups interact and attempt to achieve their collective purposes.”¹⁵ An individual's identity, therefore, will change to reflect the current political context and calculations of interest. This is particularly the case in pluralistic societies, where identities are more likely to be stratified and opportunities for self-enhancement by changing the individual or group identity are inherent in the pluralism. While this might reinforce the status quo by changing national priorities and incentives, it is possible to reshape identities as a matter of public policy.

There are models of group identities to which an individual belongs by virtue of objective, communally sanctioned criteria. The operative formula

therefore is a balance between fluidity and continuity or individual mobility with patterns of group identity that could be molded but are not merely dependent on individual whims. The objective of remolding identities as a matter of public policy would require setting standards for the community as a whole. Then individuals would ad-

just their own subjective identities to fit the new standard. The cumulative effect of individual responses would eventually produce the desired collective shift in self-perception.

In his study of the politics of pluralism, Crawford Young argues that ethnic labels are important in many polities because they provide a cognitive map to politics at a particular time. The definition of a group is in constant flux and operates on many levels. Young considers the manner in which ethnic identities change over time to be so important that in his view “any theory of ethnic conflict must incorporate change as a central element.”¹⁶ He argues that “we need to pay particular heed to the social vectors which alter identity patterns and to the political arenas which define their saliency.”¹⁷ The critical question then is whether it is possible to foster a communal or national sense of identity to provide a framework conducive to national unity. The Sudan will need this collective sense of belonging and purpose if it is to develop an identity that serves a united public interest.

Pluralism and intergroup mobility are characteristic of what happened in the Sudanese context, albeit in a divisive fashion. Identities were stratified; opportunities for self-promotion by passing were opened to the underclass in the context of the North, but a parallel identity along indigenous African lines supplemented by Christianity and elements of Western culture was evolving in the South. In the postcolonial framework, these two sets of identities came into the competitive context of the nation-state. What makes the case of the Sudan so problematic is that it is questioning assumptions of identity that have been taken for granted before the now markedly pluralistic context of the postcolonial nation-state, but which can no longer sustain an identity framework that discriminates among citizens.

The closer the proximity between groups that are otherwise differentiated and stratified by discrimination, the greater the opportunities for passing into a more workable identity. But the greater the stakes involved in crossing the dividing line, the more the urge to highlight the differences. The efforts of those who pass to differentiate themselves from those they

have left behind become direct indicators of how much they have in common, both biologically and culturally. Logically, restoring a sense of mutual identification through the common denominators should be relatively easy once the incentives for crossing are removed. This would be done by redefining identity to provide an equitable sense of belonging, by not permitting the old bases of iden-

tity to continue to confer benefits or privileges. The process of changing identity to be more reflective of the prevailing realities need not always be a function of policy or of political restructuring; it may occur as a result of discovering the facts of the situation and adjusting to them.

Self-perceptions may at times conflict with others' perceptions, prompting a crisis that would require both subjective and objective resolution. Northern Sudanese who view themselves primarily as Arab have been disappointed, even shocked, to find themselves identified differently. A casual Arab would be surprised to hear that a Negroid-looking individual claimed to be Arab unless he or she knew that the person speaking was a Sudanese, in which case most informed Arabs would recognize the anomaly of the case.¹⁸ In the Western world, northern Sudanese are classified as Africans, blacks, or Negroes and rarely if ever, as the Arabs they claim to be. Whatever their subjective view of what they are, such experiences cannot leave them totally unaffected, even though they may nevertheless retain their original belief and rationalize the discrepancy as merely a matter of ignorance on the part of the outside world. This illustrates what Ali Mazrui called the multiple marginality of the Sudan, ambiguously poised between Arab and African, Muslim and Christian worlds, perceiving its Arab identity as preeminent over its Africanism, yet looking more African than Arab, and viewed by many Africans as betraying the cause by "passing" as Arab.¹⁹ This unjustified self-perception remains unchallenged by scholars, who tend to accept it at face value but validate it with reference to culture, thereby dismissing its racial dimension.²⁰ The racial dimension, false as it may be and often is, can be a source of great evil, manifest not only in gross violations of fundamental human rights, but also at times in genocide, often in the name of a concept of nationalism based on ethnicity or race, whether or not these perceptions are factually justified. As Walker Connor has argued, by ignoring this racial dimension and explaining nationalism only in terms of rational verifiable bases, we leave a distorted and dangerous self-perception unidentified and therefore not correctable: Rational would-be explanations have abounded: relative economic deprivation; elite ambitions; rational choice theory; intense transaction flows; the desire of the intelligentsia to convert a "low," subordinate culture into a "high"

dominant one; internal colonialism;

a ploy of the bourgeoisie to undermine the class consciousness of the proletariat by obscuring the conflicting class interests within each nation, and by encouraging rivalry among the proletariat of various nations; a somewhat spontaneous mass response to competition for scarce resources. All such theories can be criticized on empirical grounds. But they can be faulted principally for their failure to reflect the emotional depth of national identity: the passions at either extreme end of the hate-love continuum which the nation often inspires, and the countless fanatical sacrifices which have been made in its name. As Chateaubriand (1768-1848) expressed it: "Men don't allow themselves to be killed for their interests; they allow themselves to be killed for their passions."²¹

Illustrating with the case of Poland, Connor went on to explain the denial aspect of the rational approach. "How much simpler it would be if adopting the Polish language, living within Poland, and adhering to Catholicism were sufficient to ... make one a Pole. But there are Germans, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians who meet these criteria but who do not consider themselves [nor are they considered] Polish."²² He concludes, "Objective criteria, in and by themselves, are therefore insufficient to determine whether or not a group constitutes a nation. The essence of the nation is a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all non-members in a most vital way."²³

The source of such a psychological bond is a deep sense of biological communion based on a common blood origin, real or assumed. These two aspects, what is real and what is assumed, become welded together in the subjective dimension, which then goes unchecked by any objective criteria. The subjective racial factor is salvaged by projecting other objective factors to rationalize and validate the claims, thereby reinforcing a self-perception that has no sound basis. The reasoning that builds on the tangible and dismisses the belief in the genetic factor "ignores the dictum that it is not what is but what people perceive as is" which shapes "attitudes and behavior. And a subconscious belief in the group's separate origin and evolution is an important ingredient of national psychology"²⁴ Recognizing the importance of this ingredient is not to

make it an irrefutable fact, but rather to identify it as a phenomenon that should be acknowledged and treated appropriately.

In his analysis of perspectives on the issue, Connor distinguishes

between the approach of the academic analyses and that of the politicians in mobilizing the people on the basis of their appeal to a blood-based national identity. According to Connor, "Both the frequency and the record of success of such appeals attest to the fact that nations are indeed characterized by a sense of consanguinity ... Our answer, then, to that often asked question, 'What is a nation?' is that it is a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group that can command loyalty because of felt kinship ties; it is, from this perspective, the fully extended family."²⁵

The fact that politicians recognize and exploit this dimension of national self-identification does not, of course, mean that they are factually justified in their characterization of identity or manner of recognition and manipulation. Indeed, it may well be that the degree to which politicians feel free to manipulate group identity is facilitated by scholars' dismissal of this dimension. Connor underscores the point without normative conclusions, for although he makes no prescription, he realizes the negative implications of the subjective blood or race factor in intolerance and even brutality against the antagonist "others."

The policy orientation of those who emphasize the cultural and other objective factors may implicitly undermine these subjective factors on which prejudice, discrimination, and hatred feed. But this would be as if one could eliminate the negative racial sentiments by asserting that they do not exist, that identity is based on the less vicious cultural values and perspectives, that what ought to be is in fact what is. Where there are grounds for claiming a particular ethnic or racial identity, the moral argument against its negative manifestation may simply be to fight evil by preaching virtue. In the Sudan, however, there is little or no evidence of the racial ingredients to support such claims and the prejudices, the divisiveness, and the mutual hostilities that emanate from them. Then the argument becomes more objective than the moral prescription of what is evil or virtuous, good or bad, right or wrong; it becomes a question of first acknowledging and taking seriously the subjective sentiments of identity based on assumed blood, explaining that those sentiments are based at best on half-truths or at worst on illusions, fictions, or myths. Exposing

them should contribute to removing the foundation of the negative or discriminatory sentiments involved and reveal alternative bases for redefining and restructuring a more mutually accommodating concept of national identity.

If people are divided by the objective facts of culture, language, or religion, the differences must be regulated and reconciled. Arguing that those differences have no bases is pointless. Refuting fictitious claims to ethnic or racial differences removes the psychological barriers rather than accepting them and then attempting to reconcile the conflicting interests involved with only moral arguments of right and wrong.

Even if Arabism and Africanism were perceived in terms of such objective indicators as culture, language, and religion, there would still be a strong case against giving these labels exclusive stereotypes because of the amount of intermingling and fusion that has taken place between the respective peoples and their cultures. This mixture pertains even to religion, which, though clear-cut, has been the scene of much eclectic mutual influence. The Islam of the Sudan is a peculiar blend that has incorporated indigenous pre-Islamic African elements.

Much of what has been said about self-perception and the need to test these ideas against objective realities that do not lend themselves to abuse as bases for discrimination has focused on the North, the dominant actor on the scene. Northern culture and outlook have clearly been more pivotal in the process of statecraft and nation building than the South. However, the concepts outlined above are equally applicable to the South in reverse.

Southern identification is predominantly in tribal terms now extended to concepts of nationhood that are founded on the African identity. Southern tribal culture, perhaps even more than that of the North, both assimilates and discriminates. Outsiders who join the tribe either as captives or as clients become adopted as members of the group and become fully integrated in due course. Outsiders who retain the symbols of their identity are considered by tribal standards to be alien and inferior. As noted earlier, some Dinka families are of Arab origin and may even bear Arab names. While they are assimilated into Dinka culture and identify themselves as Dinka, they may experience discrimination in their opportunities for marriage and in other institutional arrangements.

Despite historical connections and interactions with the Arabs, the Dinka believe that they are pure and unadulterated by Arab blood. When closely questioned, most Dinka would acknowledge that they have historically mixed with the Arabs, but these are not recognized as the result of normal intermarriages; they are considered to be the

by-products of hostile encounters that resulted in the assimilation of captives.

The North and the South share a mutual scorn based on notions of self-identification that assume a racial and cultural purity that is not supported by realities. To the extent that the African element is dominant in these realities, southern self-perception is closer to the factual situation, while the North is more out of line with its claim to Arabism. These divisive self-perceptions have been accentuated by a bitter history of hostility and animosity, making them virtually incompatible unless the national framework is substantially restructured.

IDENTITY MAP OF THE SUDAN

The fact that identity in the Sudan is still rooted in the traditional values and institutions of lineage and its implications for ethnicity and race was demonstrated by the popular response to tribal identification during the 1955-56 national census. The census officers had been warned not to ask people for their tribal identity, since that was most likely to offend, particularly the educated. To their surprise, however, the overwhelming majority of the people surveyed volunteered their tribal identity.²⁶ While tribal identities are still pervasive throughout the Sudan, in the North they have been embraced by the umbrellas of Islam and in most areas the Arabic language and the related sense of Arab belonging, which borders on ethnicity and race. These same elements of unity in the North provide the South with a basis for a common stand and purpose in resisting the North's attempts to dominate and to extend its symbols of identity as a means of fostering national unity through uniformity. Southern reaction in turn solidifies the messianic Arab-Islamic onslaught. Whatever means of unity exist within the two parts of the country are thus based largely on the Arab-African confrontation and on mutual animosity. The fact that the demographic statistics do not decisively favor any one identity makes the contest for the national identity particularly tense.

In the 1955-56 census, only 39 percent of the people of the Sudan reported that they were Arab by language, claimed genealogy and assumed racial identity. Even those who claim to be and are accepted as

Arab reflect varying degrees of Arab-African mixture. As Ali Mazrui observed, "Sudanese Arabs themselves often grossly exaggerate the

numbers of Arabs... . Much of the ... northern Sudan is a population of Arabized Africans, rather than Arabs as such. Whole groups began to identify with particular Arab tribal names, and genealogies grew up, of varying authenticity, establishing the Arabness of the different groups.”²⁷ Crawford Young also observed that Arabism in the Sudanese situation entails a delicate balance between culture and assumed descent: “Many of the 39 percent who claim to be Arabs today are in reality Arabized Nubiyin, who have over the last four centuries adopted Arabic language and culture, and Islam. However, once a community becomes Arab in self-concept, it is important for it to secure status within the Arabic frame by devising a genealogical pedigree more impressive than mere Arabization Even in the six northern provinces, Arabs totalled only 53.3 percent of the population.”²⁸

Because of the varying degrees of authenticity even among those recognized as Arabs, there is a sense of stratification in the Arabness of the various groups. Among those considered most authentic, who also happen to be among the most numerous and influential, are the Ja'aliyin. In their multiple subgroups the Ja'aliyin believe that they are the descendants of Ibrahim Ja'al, a descendant of al-Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. Together with their kindred the Shaigiya, they consider themselves the most important groups in the North.²⁹ Next to the Ja'aliyin are the Guhayna Arabs, comprising the Jamala, the camel-owning tribes of Kababish and Shukriya, and the Baggara, the cattle-herding groups of Southern Kordofan and Southern Darfur. The cattle-dominated economy of the Baggara is similar to that of the neighboring Dinka tribes farther south. The Baggara intimately interact and intermarry with the Dinka, though more often than not these unions favor the Arabs. A large proportion of the Baggara are very African in their racial and cultural characteristics. Since the Baggara do not claim any link with the family of the Prophet and its inner circles, they are considered marginal to Arab elitism. Perhaps for the same reason, compounded by the insecurities of their Negroid admixture, they are among the most chauvinistic about their Arabism and racially bigoted against their more African neighbors to the south.

Many non-Arab tribes in the North have adopted Islam, and some of them Arabic, but they have retained their ethnic and cultural identities with their own distinctive languages. Among these are the Nubians to the north, who, despite a long history of contact with Egypt and the outside world, have significantly resisted Arab assimilation; the

Beja to the east, who have much in common with their kin across the Ethiopian border; the Nuba in Southern Kordofan, who may have had historical ties with the Nubians of the North but are otherwise distinct and conspicuously negroid; and the Fur to the far west, who maintained a separate kingdom well into the second decade of British imperial intervention.

So diverse is the North that only Islam and the confrontation with the South give meaning to its unity. John Voll, commenting on the ethnic diversity of the North, has observed, "When the north is used as a noun to represent a specific entity, it implies a contrast with the south, which, by inference, helps to define the North. It may not be too extreme to say that without the concept of the south, there is no 'north' in Sudan."³⁰

If this is true of the North, it is even more so of the South, where the population has over centuries adopted certain elements of racial and cultural traits from the North. However, southerners have remained otherwise committed to their indigenous ethnic identities, are consciously resistant to assimilation by the North, and are exceedingly proud of their race and culture. Despite the prevalence of the primordial structures of ethnic identification, it is now widely accepted that the country falls into the larger, subnational divisions along the lines of Arab-African, North-South dualism. As J. Spencer Trimingham observed, "The two areas are ... very clearly distinct ethnologically and culturally. The Muslim area embraces the peoples of the dry desert and steppe regions of the north who are Arabic-speaking and Islamic. In this region there has been some admixture of Arab blood with that of the original population and the adoption of Islam has fused the peoples so that they are culturally homogeneous."³¹

Whatever the factors that prevented the spread of Arabism and Islam southward, southerners, both traditional and modern, remain not only resistant to Arabization and Islamization, but somewhat contemptuous of the Arab-Islamic model of the North. Admittedly, this is a highly emotive perspective, fostered by bitter history reinforced by the competing Christian missionary and British administrative influences in the region,

all of which have combined to predispose southerners negatively in their view of the North. But it is also an attitude of calculated or instinctive self-defense, triggered by an equally if not more, prejudiced attitude from the North, backed by the superior tools of political and economic domination. As Nelson Kasfir put it, "In the

process of becoming a single political state, Sudan emerged as a deeply divided society in which ethnicity region, and religion were frequently used to organize political competition.”³²

If the focus is on the concept of a collective national identity, and if a sense of common identity is only possible if the rulers and the people feel that they are bound together in association, the next question is what the common association is or can be.³³ Abstractions like the nation, not supported by the concrete factors that consolidate the sense of identity are unlikely to do the trick. One must therefore search for a basis of identity that can effectively bridge the gap between the mutually hostile ethnic or subnational sentiments and the postulated more conciliatory loyalty to the nation. Clearly Arabism and Islam cannot be acceptable to the South and significant parts of the North as bases for the national identity. And yet both are central to the northern elite's self-perception. Attempts at resolving this dilemma have centered on a flexible and potentially accommodating interpretation of Arabism as a cultural and not a racial phenomenon, a manipulative exercise that does not appear to be achieving its objective. Even though increasing numbers of southerners now speak Arabic and many have converted to Islam, the ethnic or racial animosity has worsened, overshadowing the question of a national identity.

DYNAMICS OF IDENTITY

Martin Daly has articulated both the subjective dualism of the Arab-African context and the objective conditions that appear to favor the Arab component of the Sudanese identity. He concludes that the gulf may prove unbridgeable and the notion of one nation unsustainable. Daly explains how the dominant riverain northern Sudanese placed great importance on their Arab ancestry, “however problematic that is, a phenomenon facilitated by the patriarchal nature of their society and the relative unimportance of color in determining ethnicity.”³⁴

Daly's reference to color as unimportant reflects the tension between the subjective and the objective factors in northern Sudanese identity. The fact that some northerners claim to be Arabs even though their color

does not support the standard color of an Arab upholds Daly's assertion that objectively color is not important. Subjectively however, northern Sudanese do consider color to be critically important, how-

ever subtle the differences in shade. Daly underscores the uncompromising northern commitment to its Arab-Islamic model of identity:

The political and economic history of the modern period has resulted in the creation from among them [Northern Sudanese] of an elite that is open only on its own cultural and religious terms. Thus a Muslim Northerner can take a non-Muslim Southern wife, and their children, raised as Muslims, will be "Arabs" in the sense that their father is. Since Islam forbids the marriage of Muslim women and non-Muslim men, an equivalent process of assimilation to non-Arab identity cannot occur. It has therefore been postulated, not unconvincingly, that a natural process of assimilation will inevitably result in the emergence of a Sudanese "norm" closely approximating today's Northern Sudanese identity. Recent attempts by various interested individuals and groups to posit the existence of an "Afro-Arab" identity have remained the stuff of academic discussion rather than of personal or corporate identity: while a Northern riverain Sudanese might off-handedly recognize his "Afro-Arab" ancestry, no Dinka or Shilluk, Bari or Azande will or can. That the Sudan as a whole is becoming "Afro-Arab" is another matter, viewed with satisfaction or dismay, accepted as a process of history or condemned as cultural imperialism.

The absence of a convincing alternative to this norm in the Sudan as a whole and within both the North and the South contributes to its appearance of inevitability.³⁵

Although Daly's prediction that the North is likely to assimilate the South into its current Arab-Islamic model has a great deal to support it, the assertiveness of the competing model that has been evolving in the South should not be discounted. Daly's argument that there is no convincing alternative implies that the Arabness of the North is unchallengeable by the South and by the non-Arab elements within the North itself. In an atmosphere of peaceful interaction, this would almost certainly be the case. Given the atmosphere of conflict and mutual animosity that prevails, this conclusion cannot be taken for granted,

especially in view of the problematic gap between the perception and the observable facts of northern identity. Much that has been written on this subject, especially by northern writers, reflects more an acrobatic intellectual promotion of the political objectives of northern identity than a dispassionate analysis of the competing models. The

northern predisposition is to see the concept of “Arabism” as primarily cultural and nonracial, a classic though controversial interpretation which in essence attempts to reconcile the contradictions in the historical experience of the Arab world as reflected in contemporary conditions and especially in its interaction with the non-Arab world.

Lloyd Binagi attributes the Arabs' view of their identity to the success of their policy of assimilation through conquest, conversion to Islam, the spread of the Arabic language, and intermarriage.³⁶ According to Raphael Patai, the term Arab in the post-Islamic period “came to denote all the peoples who, after having been converted to Islam, gave up their ancestral languages and adopted Arabic instead.”³⁷ The evidence of this historical assimilation provides the basis for an argument that anyone can become an Arab simply by adopting Arab culture, speaking Arabic, and, preferably converting to Islam. A widely accepted definition in the Arab world is that Arabs are those who speak Arabic, are brought up in Arab culture, live in an Arab country, believe in Muhammad's teachings, and cherish the memory of the Arab empire.³⁸ As Binagi says, this definition, “like that of the Arab League, which defined an Arab as ‘He who lives in our country, speaks our language, is brought up in our culture, and takes pride in our glory’ ... is problematic and obviously questionable.”³⁹

While this definition is designed to be open in principle to everyone who wishes to meet its terms and therefore to have a claim to legitimacy, in reality finely drawn distinctions tend to deny such Arab identity to the African population in the South even if they should aspire to it, and it requires these African populations to abandon their indigenous cultures. Nevertheless, this problematic definition is often applied with little sensitivity to what it means for the fellow Sudanese who are not Arab and for whom the identity of the nation is clearly affected by the Arabism of the North. As John and Sarah Voll have observed, the two critical factors that Arab intellectuals and scholars highlight are language and history perceived in genealogical terms. “A ... person must be identified in both of these dimensions to be considered an Arab. The person must speak Arabic and consider it to be his or her home language. In addition, however, because many non-Arab Sudanese are native speakers of

Arabic, the person must also be identified with a tribe that is believed to have come originally from the Arabian Peninsula or with a group that has been so Arabized in culture and custom that it has no other visible or publicly known identity.”⁴⁰

Generally, the racial anomalies of northern identity, the identity crisis implicit in the pluralism of the nation-state, and the racial overtones of the Arab attitude toward the more negroid Africans, particularly in the South, all combine to make the cultural concept of Arabism particularly appealing to northern Sudanese politicians, intellectuals, and even scholars. In his statement to the 1965 Round Table Conference on the problem of the South, Prime Minister Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifa observed: "Gentlemen, Arabism, which is a basic attribute of the majority of the population of this country and of many African countries besides, is not a racial concept which unites the members of a certain racial group. It is a linguistic, cultural and non-racial link that binds together numerous races, black, white and brown. Had Arabism been anything else but this, most modern Arabs, whether African or Asian, including the entire population of the Northern Sudan, would cease to be 'Arab' at all."⁴¹

Muddathir' Abd al-Rahim, the scholar-diplomat-politician, probably had a hand in drafting the prime minister's words, as his own point of view is almost identical. Abd al-Rahim attributed much of the misunderstanding underlying the analysis of the southern problem to the erroneous view of Arabism and Africanism. "Just as Arabism is a cultural, but non-racial bond, Africanism also is a geographical, political and cultural and non-racial link which binds together the various peoples of Africa irrespective of differences of race, color or language. Hence the close association between Arabism and Africanism not within the bounds of Africa itself, but on inter-region and international levels as well."⁴²

Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim argues that the Northern Sudan is more representative of Africa because it combines elements of Arabism and Africanism that are characteristic of the continent. "The fact that they are predominantly Muslim and Arab does indeed distinguish the Northern Sudanese from their Southern compatriots ... but it does not mean that they are not African. As the only region in the continent — and indeed the world — in which the physical, racial and cultural diversities of Africa as a whole are not merely represented but synthesized into a unique and unparalleled entity the Northern Sudan may in fact be described as more representative of Africa as a whole than any other country or region,

including the Southern Sudan.”⁴³

In noting that “the great majority of the [northern] population rightly feel that they are Arab and African at the same time, to an

equal degree, and without any sense of tension or contradiction,”⁴⁴ ‘Abd al-Rahim is overgeneralizing from the perspective of an elite, and even then he clearly overstates the case. Certainly, the Arab tribesmen are proud to be Arab without being aware of the notion of Africanism, far less how the two have become fused. Ordinary Sudanese Arabs are at ease with the reality of the African-Arab mold, which they perceive as monolithically Arab.⁴⁵ Just as the sophisticated southerner is conscious of his Africanness, the sophisticated northerner is conscious of the Arab-African dualism of northern identity. Indeed, the more aware of the dualism a northern Sudanese is, the more he realizes the inequities involved and the more he feels the tensions and the contradictions of this duality.

The close interconnection and the ambiguities or ambivalences among the various components of Arabism, such as culture, language, and religion, are justified by sayings allegedly from the Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad al-Fateh, a member of the Umma party, responded emphatically to a question on the basis for defining Arabism: “We cannot of course define the issue of Arabness because the Prophet Muhammad, God's Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him, had declared that ‘Everyone who speaks Arabic is an Arab.’ It is not a matter of race or color; it is a broad definition.”⁴⁶ Sadiq al-Mahdi also quotes the Prophet as saying, “The God is one, the father is one and the Religion is one. Arabism is not derived from a father or a mother but it is the tongue; whoever speaks Arabic is an Arab.”⁴⁷ The mere fact that Sadiq mentions in the same context God, Father, Religion, and Arabism implies that he sees them as intimately, perhaps intractably interconnected, but extendable to assimilate others. According to yet another source, the Prophet is supposed to have said, “I love the Arabs for three things: because I am Arab, because the Koran is Arabic and because the tongue of those who go to paradise, once in paradise, is Arabic.”⁴⁸ It is obvious from this that being Arab, Arabic-speaking, and a Muslim are separate but linked and mutually reinforcing. It is clearly the combination of all three that makes the identity complete and exalting. To miss one is to reduce the value of the composite whole.⁴⁹ As Lilian and Neville Sanderson put it, “Even conversion to Islam could not fully compensate for the absence of a

conventionally accepted Arab ancestry.”⁵⁰

The myth of descent from an original Arab ancestor predominates among the northern Sudanese. As Ali Mazrui noted, “Disputes as to

whether such and such a family is really Arab by descent or not, and evaluations of family prestige partly in terms of lighter shades of colour, have all remained an important part of the texture of Sudanese life in the north. Prejudices based on colour have by no means disappeared.”⁵¹ Abd al-Rahman al-Bashir, former commissioner of refugees, made the same point. While recognizing that Islam and the Arabic language were important factors in being considered an Arab, he emphasized genealogy:

You must belong to something [a known genealogy] ... say to the Abbasids [which means] that your great, great, great grandfather [original ancestor] is Al-Abbas, the Uncle of the Prophet, so that you are distinguished. Some of the Sudanese think of themselves as Ashraf [descendants of the Prophet's closest friends and associates]. This might be forced, but it gives them satisfaction. These are the things that are in the mind of the people: that you speak Arabic, the good language of the Koran, and you are from the Arab world which is the best nation God has created. Rightly or wrongly, this is the way people think. They find pride in this and in their origin, *asl*. The word *asl* is very important in the Sudan. If you want to marry you should look for the *asl*. People think that way: How pure is this man? Is he contaminated or not? I am just explaining the way people think.⁵²

Since in reality most northern Sudanese families are mixed, the notion of race, *unsur* or *fins*, from which the word for nationality — *jinsiyya* — is derived, has to be flexible in terms of color. To be racially Arab then does not require being as light as the original Arabs. On the contrary, the Sudanese have developed their color scheme, which favors the mixed mold as the ideal, relegating both black and white to a lesser order. But even within this color range, shades are critically important. Relating the notion of *asl* to color, Abd al-Rahman al-Bashir, a man of very dark complexion, noted, “Black is depicted in [Arabic] literature as something not good. That is why people are described as not black but brown or green. Green in the Sudan means that their *ast* (origin) is not negroid.”⁵³

Although Sudanese, northerners and southerners alike, range in skin

color from exceedingly black to various shades of brown, Sudanese passports almost never describe the holder as “black.” The description used for the overwhelming majority of the holders would be

“green,” the standard color of the nation in official eyes. Indeed, green is seen as the ideal Sudanese color of skin because it reflects a brown that is not too dark, giving associations with black Africa and possibly slavery and it is not too light, hinting at gypsy (halabi) or European Christian forbears.⁵⁴

Despite pride in the Arab identity, the word Arab is sometimes used by the urban population of the North to connote an unsophisticated tribal nomad, with outmoded rural values and out-of-context manners. As Ahmed al-Shahi observed about the Nuri people of the Shaigiya tribe in the Northern Province, “In one context to claim descent from an ‘arab’ tribe is a matter of pride; in another context, to be an ‘arab’ indicates a nomadic way of life and an associated inferior social status. (Conversely, nomads look down upon sedentary agriculturalists.)”⁵⁵ To complicate the picture even more, as al-Shahi implies, the association with rural life and values usually connoted by the word “tribe,” gabila, is also positive. To say, even in urban circles, that one is wad gabila, “son of a tribe,” or wad gabail (son of tribes), which has a more generic association with the concept of the tribe, or the even more pluralistic awlad gabail, “sons of tribes” carries a complimentary connotation that calls to mind generosity, courage, and integrity.

Such derogatory terms as zunj, “Negro,” or abid, “slave” commonly applied to the southern Sudanese and black Africans in general, are now less rampant than they were even a few decades ago. But they are still popular in casual conversations that sometimes have a serious and even racist edge. Mansour Khalid has intimated that, “In the closed circles of northern Sudan there is a series of unprintable slurs for Sudanese of non-Arab stock, all reflective of semi-concealed prejudice.”⁵⁶ As noted earlier, it is not uncommon for a racial slur or a slip of the tongue to be corrected with the cryptic explanation that the word abid, for instance, is not intended as an insult, but to signify that we are all abeed Allah — slaves of God. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that while the northern view of the southerner has improved considerably, the word Janubi, “southerner,” and its plural form, Janubiyeen, still carry a significant connotation of racial (and cultural) inferiority, backwardness, and

socioeconomic distance from the northerner.⁵⁷

The impression should not be given, however, that only the northerner has a condescending view of the southerner. Quite the contrary; the prejudice is mutual. Southerners generally believe that the differences between them and the Arabs are genetic, cultural, and deeply

embedded. They also acknowledge that their prejudices are mutual. But they realize that the Arabs have the upper hand, which gives their racial and cultural chauvinism the means to impose itself on the South. As a young Dinka put it, "The Arabs despise us and we know it; we also despise them, but they do not know it."⁵⁸ The dominance of the Arabs and the Dinka scorn for them are reflected in these lines from a song by a prisoner, advising a Dinka policeman not to follow the ways of his Arab colleagues in their demeaning mistreatment of Dinka prisoners: Mijang de Dak, do not walk behind us Do not follow us with the whip ...

People do not enslave one another When they are both initiated.

Mijang de Dak, leave that to Dhieu ...

A man known for lack of heart He sides with the ways of the Arabs ...

The vileness of the Arab police A Dinka must not join.⁵⁹

In another song a former prisoner, lamenting the mistreatment by an Arab policeman, Nur, recalls previous wars between the Arabs and the Dinka and blames his forbears for having missed the fictitious ancestor of the Arab policeman: We were driven to hard labor I almost said my dying will; I stood and thought!

I thought of why my grandfather made his spear pierce the gourd And missed the Arab;

It is my grandfather whom I blame for Nur's shouting at me; Nur shouted at me with ears as red as those of a bat.

A vile race that cannot tell the father of a child.⁶⁰

Southern scorn for the Arabs lies in the realm of moral values, which they believe to be inherent in the genetic and cultural composition of identity. This was dramatized by Chief Makuei Bilkuei, a man of renowned spiritual powers, inherited from a long line of religious leaders: "I don't speak Arabic. God has refused my speaking Arabic. I asked God, 'Why

don't I speak Arabic?" And he said, 'If you now speak

Arabic, you will turn into a bad man.' And I said, 'There is something good in Arabid!' And he said, 'No, there is nothing good in it.'"61 The perceptions and prejudices are evidently shared equally.

Northern and southern perspectives reveal that the divisive identity factors in the Sudan are both racial and cultural, and the explanation rests in a broad, inclusive understanding of culture as a concept. Indeed, the tenuousness of northern claims to Arabism in itself underscores the role of culture in cultivating self-perceptions, so that even biological or racial claims are ultimately culture bound. Culture becomes an overarching social engineer that molds perspectives on identity even on racial bases. As Dunstan Wai has observed, "Whether the North is both Arab and African or exclusively one or the other, is not crucial. The significant point is that those who wield political power, generally the educated elites, think the North is Arab. Thus, even if biologically they are both Arab and African, they have opted in their choice of self-identification for Arabism."62

UNESCO defines culture as "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditional beliefs."63 A recent study defined the concept as "a set of shared and enduring meanings, values and beliefs that characterize national, ethnic or other groups and orient their behavior."64 In this sense, culture is conceived as a determinant of self-perception that delineates the social boundaries in interethnic classification and interaction. It is a concept of identification with a coherent value system and a cohesive worldview, a set of principles to guide and evaluate behavior patterns within a flexibly demarcated social, economic, and political framework.

This broad perspective on culture links perceptions on the various components of identity, which make the dividing line between racial and cultural sentiments too thin to be differentiated in popular consciousness. The result of these ambiguities is that an unacknowledged racial cleavage remains unbridged and is indeed deepened by the elites on

both sides, one building on a fictional notion of Arabism, the other responding with an equally fictional notion of Africanism, both overlooking the realities of Sudanism. As Ali Mazrui put it: "Although the Sudan might not be quite as Arab as it is sometimes imagined, what matters sometimes is the phenomenon of self-conception among

Sudanese of influence. Distinguished Arabic-speakers of the North, and distinguished southerners, have all been known to exaggerate the ethnic chasm which separates northerners from the peoples of the South.”⁶⁵

THE NATIONAL DILEMMAS

Inherent in the northern Sudanese preoccupation with Arab descent is a sense of pride whose downside is prejudice against the African or negroid element that remains conspicuously visible, especially among the newly Arabized groups. This prejudice results in a stratification and a discrimination that is crucial to the North-South, Arab-African conflict. The resultant dilemmas of inequitable integration into a unified whole or parity of diversity entailing a degree of separatism rotate around the prevailing notions of interracial procreation and the destiny of the progeny.

Ali Mazrui, a Muslim from Mombasa with family branches in Zanzibar, the product of Afro-Arab mixture, has made provocative observations on the concepts of symmetrical acculturation and asymmetrical miscegenation.⁶⁶ Symmetrical miscegenation occurs when two different races intermarry and produce a comparable number of males and females who cross their racial barriers and obtain partners from each other, even though other factors may intervene to make the equation less symmetrical. Asymmetrical miscegenation occurs in situations where most if not all of the fathers are from one racial group, which exercises its predominance or chooses to supplement its size through intermarriage. In most circumstances, if the father from the dominant group is willing to claim the progeny, the identity of the father's group is likely to pass on to his children. But if the father's side is unwilling to claim the children, then they are likely to fall back on the mother's group identity.

In his discussion of the fate of the children produced under asymmetrical miscegenation, Mazrui posed the almost rhetorical question of whether the children of a marriage between a dominant race and an underprivileged race are likely to follow the privileges of the patrilineal identity or the handicaps of the underprivileged mother's line. Or do they become a class unto themselves? Predictably Mazrui, building pragmatically on the logic of the maximization postulate, which

guided the assimilationist trend of the Arab-Islamic culture, answers his question in favor of the father's identity but that itself depends on whether the children have a choice.

Mazrui explained the logic of the Arabs' assimilationist approach: "If the father is Arab, the child is Arab without reservations. If we visualize an Arab marrying a Nilotic woman in the fourteenth century and visualize the son being born, the son would be Arab. If we imagine in turn that the son again married a Nilotic woman who bore a son — this son, too, would be an Arab. If we then assumed that the process is repeated, generation after generation, until a child is born in the second half of the twentieth century with only a drop of his blood still ostensibly of Arab derivation and the rest of his blood indubitably Nilotic, the twentieth century child is still an Arab."⁶⁷

According to Islam, any child born to a slave woman by her master is legitimate and is fully identified with the father. Although it is conceivable that those who claim Arab descent or place themselves in particular Arab tribal genealogies need not have Arab blood flowing in their veins, a consistent theme of northern Sudanese identification with Arabism has been the assertion of Arab paternity and patrilineal descent, real or imagined.

The flexible approach to the definition of an Arab in the Sudan, even when understood racially has succeeded in its objective of broadening the scope of the identity of Arabism. The 39 percent of the Sudanese population who were classified as Arab by the 1955-56 census included all those who were racially considered or claimed to be members of "an Arab tribe," an identification which, according to Mazrui, "constituted biological intermingling between the races, real or claimed."⁶⁸ Nevertheless, northern ambitions for widening the circles of Arab identity go beyond this definition of an Arab. Muddathir' Abd Al-Rahim, for instance, has asserted with surprising vigor and conviction that "if the generally accepted definition of Arab is applied, *i.e.* one whose mother tongue is Arabic, 51 per cent of the Sudanese must, according to census figures, be Arabs — and not 39 per cent as the reports state."⁶⁹

Judging from the efforts of successive governments since independence, there is little doubt that the North believes that the fluidity and flexibility of Arabism as an all-encompassing and nonracial concept could be used to assimilate the South into the Arab-Islamic mold, and some observers see this as inevitable.⁷⁰ Their analysis clearly overlooks

the strength of the indigenous southern culture in resisting Arabization.

Mazrui acknowledges that the process works both ways because the same principles are at work on both sides. He emphasizes the Dinka to support his argument. "The Sudanese, both Arab and black African, are, on the whole, strongly patrilineal. This has tended to encourage fathers to claim their children, particularly if they are boys, for inclusion into their original family. The Dinka seem to be at least as patrilineal as the Arabs. In general, it would seem that if the father is Dinka the child is almost certainly also Dinka, especially if it is a boy."⁷¹ Referring to the Dinka of the northwestern Sudan who have mixed considerably with the Baggara Arabs, Mazrui notes that "in appearance many betray their mixture, but they are Dinka by language and culture."⁷²

Although he acknowledges that it is too early to judge the result, Mazrui sees the process as an important aspect of nation building, one in which race and regionalism are beginning to crosscut, with the Dinka again seen as playing a potentially determining role. "The Dinka may be up to nearly four million. This makes the group the largest single tribe in the Sudan as a whole, both north and south If one out of every five Sudanese is a Dinka, and if the tradition of intermarriage between the Dinka and the Arabs is increasing, the possibilities of nationally significant racial integration are indeed real."⁷³

Mazrui clearly underplays the importance the Dinka themselves attach to perpetuating their own identity in the competitive Arab-African interactive context. His conclusion that the Arab-Islamic identity will prevail assumes a continuing framework of unity dominated by the North. That resistance to this domination could indeed lead to a dualism of the national identity or a partition of the country does not seem to figure in his equation. There is also the element of gender equality that is invading and pervading both the Arab and the southern cultures. It can no longer be assumed that the male side of a mixed family identity will dominate, certainly in the emerging global context.

Thus, while the logical conclusion of the process should leave the

possibilities of dual assimilation into Arab and African identities at least tentative, there is no uncertainty on the part of the North about the ultimate objective of integrating the country along Arab-Islamic lines. As Mazrui observed, "The argument here is that if the southerners have to have their traditional African ways changed, they had better be changed in the direction of greater homogeneity with the North."

And this means Arabization and Islamization, rather than Islamization in religious terms. It makes sense, therefore, that governmental policy committed to the reduction of differences between North and South, should have prescribed the teachings of Islamic students in southern schools.”⁷⁴

What did not make sense, however, was the use of coercive force by the state to impose the symbols of integration on the South instead of the less oppressive strategy by which Arabization and Islamization had been effected in the North. The natural response from the South was resistance. As Mazrui observed, “It is true that the northerners drifted into excesses in their enthusiasm for greater integration The sheer military repression ... has some times been ruthless and devoid of adequate moral restraint. The process of integrating the South with the North ... might even have been a case of two steps backwards, one step forward: by no means the most effective way of reaching one's destination if that destination is ahead rather than to the rear.”⁷⁵

In another context, Mazrui, addressing himself to the moderation of the military rule of Abboud, the overall instinct for democracy within the North, and the contrasting attitudes of northerners toward the South, observed that “relations between the North and the South constitute one of the most acute crises of cleavage in the African Continent as a whole.”⁷⁶ Although Mazrui sees Sudanese democracy in the North as by no means secure and even predicted that it could be overthrown again, as has occurred several times in the past, he acknowledges that there has persisted “‘a surprising instinct for democratic forms.’ And the instinct might be a measure of the people's capacity to identify with each other, and therefore to refrain from certain excesses of treatment. Yet the Arab-Sudanese democratic instinct has often failed to be effective as a deterrent against Arab brutalisation of the South.”⁷⁷

If national unity has been postulated as an overriding goal and if the prevailing notions of identity are inherently divisive, then what alternative basis of identity will bring the Sudanese together? Muddathir ‘Abd Al-Rahim argues that the differences between the South and the North

should not be a foundation for separation, but should instead be a basis for giving the South a special status within the unitary framework: "The modern state, especially in Africa, is not and could not be founded on religious, racial or even cultural homogeneity. It is based, above all, on the community of interests and objectives of

peoples who, different though they may be in certain respects, have, in the present age, met across continental and not merely tribal or regional boundaries.”⁷⁸

What Abd al-Rahim presumably envisioned for the South was some form of autonomy, comparable to what was provided under the Addis Ababa Agreement. Today, he might concede a federal arrangement. But as long as Arabism and Africanism are envisaged as dominant in defining the national framework, they will continue to evoke the emotions of primordial sentiments of descent, ethnicity, and race and therefore remain divisive. To this dualism has now been added the religious dimension in the form of Islamic revivalism, which has so far proved even more divisive.

The role of religion in society also raises similar questions with respect to the creation of a framework for equitable national unity. In a study of northern Muslim perspectives on the national conflict, the American scholar John Voll has elaborated on the differences and the common features among the various political and religious factions, using Horowitz's concept of ranked and unranked societies.⁷⁹ Although this is not Voll's main thesis, his review clearly substantiates the extent to which all the main political parties in varying degrees regard the South as marginal to their Arab-Islamic perception of the country either to be dominated and integrated or only peripherally accommodated. Their commitment to Islam and its twin concept of Arabism gives them a sense of superiority that sees the South as an anomaly and a national challenge to the spread of the faith and its associated culture. Although all the political parties share this view, the more puritanical view of the Islamic society is represented by the National Islamic Front, which is now in power. It is conspicuous in its vigorous and uncompromising commitment to imposing Islam and Arabism on the South through various strategies of assimilation, ranging from crude force to material inducements.

According to Horowitz's concept of ranked ethnic systems, ethnic and class divisions coincide, and ethnic groups are ordered in a hierarchy in which one is regarded as superordinate and the other subordinate. In unranked systems, ethnic groups coexist on “parallel” bases, with

stratification internalized only within each group. Ranked groups are seen as components of a single society, whereas parallel groups in unranked systems are considered to be whole societies in themselves and may indeed have been fully autonomous at one time.⁸⁰

In applying this typology to the Sudan, Voll finds a complex combination of both systems with considerable differences in the attitudes of political and religious factions. While Voll acknowledges the tendency to see the country as ranked, especially in its dichotomy between North and South, with the North viewed as dominant and the South as subordinate, he sees in the very division between the two parts of the country an element of parallel coexistence that is reflective of an unranked system. He describes the Addis Ababa Agreement as "based on a perception of Sudan as an unranked system within which the incipiently autonomous south was recognized as a separate but participating element."⁸¹ Voll interprets these two perspectives as reflecting an ambiguity in the northern attitude toward the South. Within the northern context, Voll sees the Sudan ranked, with southerners, subordinated; in South-North relations, he sees a more unranked system. He feels that this ambivalence reflects a contradiction between the Islamic ideal of equality among Muslims and the reality of stratification in society. He believes that the role of special clans and holy families competing for leadership and influence is incompatible with Muslim ideals and is rationalized only in terms of a special blessing of baraka, bestowing an inherited spiritual power. This was the device that allowed a ranked system to make its way into Sufist Islam.

Perceptions of Sudanese society as ranked or unranked determine a person's or a group's position on social change. If the society were ranked, resolution of the resulting conflicts would necessitate a fundamental transformation of society; if it were unranked, such a major change in the system would not be justified. According to Voll, the SPLM-SPLA perceives the system as ranked and consequently calls for transformation to resolve the conflict of stratification. Voll sees northern factions as divided in their perspectives, but on the whole they tend to see the country as unranked and call for recognition of parallel groups through autonomous arrangements. Voll identifies four major groups with variations on this theme: the Mahdists, the Khatimiyya, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Republican Brotherhood.

According to the Mahdist perspective, the Sudan is an unranked society

in its ethnic composition, with Islam providing a comprehensive social order or framework. Non-Muslim groups that are geographically separate are to be dealt with in various ways, either in rivalry or through cooperation. This is said to have generally been the view of the Mahdists toward the South, reflected specifically by their leader,

Sadiq al-Mahdi. In Sadiq's view, according to Voll, the solution to the problem of national unity in the Sudan should be to provide an umbrella under which the principal social systems could find protection within a common national framework. For Sadiq, Islam and Arabism should provide the national integration mechanism. In his address to parliament during his first period as prime minister in 1966, Sadiq said in an often quoted passage that the "dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one ... and this Nation will not have its entity identified and its prestige and pride preserved except under an Islamic revival."⁸² In July 1986 he spoke of the "Muslim majority's desire to make Islam the arbiter of their private and public lives in conciliation with the civil, human and religious rights of others."⁸³ Islam for the Mahdists determines the character of the state in which "conflicts are resolved through a bargained recognition of the rights of various minorities, whose security can be ensured without threatening the Islamic identity of the whole. This may involve utilizing new interpretations of Islam; nonetheless, the approach must remain authentically Islamic."⁸⁴

Voll reports that the Khatimiyya perceive the country vis-à-vis the South as unranked in its ethnic pluralism. They are therefore prepared to consider special arrangements for the non-Muslim minorities within an Islamic national framework.

Both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Republican Brotherhood reflect perspectives different from those of the two leading Sufist sects. Voll says that the Muslim Brothers under the leadership of Dr. Hassan al-Turabi perceive the Sudan as unranked in one respect, that they recognize the non-Muslims as distinct and separate groups in the society who should receive special protection, but also as ranked in another respect, that they see the country as predominantly Islamic, where the Muslim majority should prevail over the non-Muslim minority in shaping the character and destiny of the nation. "The brotherhood perspective remains tied to a perception of the Sudan as a Muslim society whose structures should preserve the rights of participating minorities but whose basic nature must continue to be defined by the identity of the majority."⁸⁵

The fourth faction, the Republican Brotherhood, is the group that was founded and led by Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, who was executed by Nimeiri's regime for heresy in January 1985. Recognized as liberal in its interpretation of Islam and its view of non-Muslims and women, the Brotherhood bases its religious creed on drawing a distinction between the egalitarian and nondiscriminatory teachings of the

early period of the Prophet Muhammad's ministry in Mecca and the harsher Islamic doctrines of the later period of his leadership in Medina. The Mecca message, according to Taha, is more in tune with requirements of the twentieth century than the outmoded message of Medina.⁸⁶ As Voll observes: "Mahmoud Muhammad Taha was a strong critic of the discrimination that he saw in Sudan, based on many different inequalities — social, economic, political, and religious. His critique of contemporary Muslim society, based as it was on his personal experience in Sudan, assumed an ethnically ranked society. His solution was to reorient the world view of Muslims so that those features by which people are ranked would not cause harmful discrimination. In Islam, as he reinterpreted it, the emphasis is on individuals in society and on their equality regardless of race, sex, or faith."⁸⁷

Voll's analysis of the northern perspectives is penetrating and to a significant extent illuminating on the conflict and its potential outcomes. Clearly all the different perspectives embody some stratification or ranking within the nation-state or other collective frameworks in which the non-Muslim communities, especially those of the South, occupy a subordinate position. Whatever differences exist between the various northern factions are only of degree, and the solutions they would adopt vary only in their range of recognition and accommodation of the existing diversities. Implicit in each of these viewpoints is the hope that the diversities will eventually disappear in favor of the Arab-Islamic mold of the North. In this, the fundamentalists or revivalists now in power appear to be gaining the upper hand—presumably because they are clear minded and uncompromising in their determination to integrate the country along Islamic-Arabic lines, to dominate and subjugate the non-Muslim, non-Arab South, to establish a homogeneous Islamic state, and to use that as a stepping-stone for the spread of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa. Shortly before his appointment as prime minister, Sadiq al-Mahdi undertook a tour of East Africa, including Somalia, where he said about the South, "The failure of Islam in southern Sudan would be the failure of the Sudanese Muslims to the international Islamic cause. Islam has a holy mission in Africa, and the southern Sudan is the beginning of that mission."⁸⁸ As one northern scholar-statesman observed, "Sadiq is not

just a typical member of the northern elite, he is its archetype. Convinced of its own ethno-cultural supremacy and persuaded of its inborn virtue, this elite has no qualms over behaving as the self-appointed mentor of the rest of the Sudanese, meaning by that those who are neither Muslim, nor claim Arab pedi-

gree. What those ethnocentrics do not often realize, and are not prepared to accept, is the fact that the other face of ethnocentrism is racial bias.”⁸⁹

Even the Republican Brothers, undoubtedly the most liberal of all the religious political factions in the North, perceive their radical reforms within the framework of Islam, albeit liberally reinterpreted. Since the South has demonstrated the will to resist, the pervasive northern attitude in favor of an Arab-Islamic order can only be a recipe for continued cleavage, tensions, conflicts, and drifting apart. If the concept of the unranked society is carried to its logical conclusion in the Sudan, two separate entities should emerge, since full equality that would sustain unity is not possible under an Islamic order. Yet none of the ideological camps consider separation as an option, except perhaps the Muslim Brothers, whose vision paradoxically aims at Islamizing the African continent and indeed the world.

With the Muslim Brotherhood now publicly organized under the wider rubric of the National Islamic Front and with the collaboration of the military regime aggressively set on implementing its Islamic agenda, the prospects of removing religion from the public platform appear to have diminished, at least in the short run.

Although other elements of northern identity, such as Arabism with all its complexities, are still used in an eclectic fashion to rally support from varied sources, the message of Islamic fundamentalism or revivalism as spearheaded by a modern class of educated youth is a powerful model, which they argue should not be circumscribed by racial stratification. But because the notion of Arabism has always been a mixture of religion, culture, and race, and because the factor of religion itself is highly polarizing, this northern progress has not enhanced the prospects for bridging the differences between the North and the South. On the contrary, it has only sharpened the differences and brought the conflict to a head. As a result, it may have helped to crystallize and clarify the divisive issues and made the options less ambiguous.

THE PULLS OF MARGINALITY

The more the Arab-Islamic identity of the North is questioned or threatened, whether by internal forces or by the challenge from the

South, the greater the defensive attachment to it and the more it is vigorously imposed on the country as the basis of the national identity. This in turn provokes the South even more, and the vicious cycle is reinforced and sustained. Although Arab identity has always been acknowledged, the nationalist fervor of Arabism is an elite concept that first emerged with the movement for independence from European domination. Later it was extended to Pan-Arabism, with Egypt always as the source of inspiration. After independence, the Arab-Islamic fervor was mainly directed toward the Arabization and Islamization of the South. The southern assertion of Africanism only accentuated the need to raise the banner of Arabism even higher.

Sayed Ismail al-Azhari, one of the legendary figures of the nationalist struggle, who was to become the first prime minister and later president, stated this reaction in unequivocal terms in an address to the Round Table Conference on the problem of the South in 1965:

I feel at this juncture obliged to declare that we are proud of our Arab origin, of our Arabism and of being Moslems. The Arabs came to this continent, as pioneers, to disseminate a genuine culture, and promote sound principles which have shed enlightenment and civilization throughout Africa at a time when Europe was plunged into the abyss of darkness, ignorance and doctrinal and scholarly backwardness. It is our ancestors who held the torch high and led the caravan of liberation and advancement; and it is they who provided a superior melting-pot for Greek, Persian and Indian culture, giving them the chance to react with all that was noble in Arab culture, and handing them back to the rest of the world as a guide to those who wished to extend the frontiers of learning.⁹⁰

The psychological roots of such an exaggerated attachment to Arabism go deep into the history of the threatening and even humiliating relations with the Christian West. Appreciating this psychological dimension is important to understanding the threat of demotion to the supposedly inferior African identity, which both the South and much of the North pose to the Sudanese claim to Arabism by advocating a restructuring of the

country's identity to be more reflective of its visible African element. This deeply entrenched inferiority complex has developed the Arab superiority complex that is so vigorously committed to the Islamic-Arab identity and its agenda for nation building. Ed-

ward Atiyah, a Syrian who first taught at Gordon Memorial College in the 1920s and then made a career in the Sudan's government service, vividly described the attitude of his contemporaries among the newly educated class of northern Sudanese: He arrived in 1926 to find the country quiet and the educated class subdued, but with his students displaying mixed emotions — excitement about the outside world with its superior knowledge, power, and wealth, and a sense of self-pity for being backward, poor, and ignorant, all of which evoked “a collective feeling of smallness and inferiority” and provoked in many cases both a “strongly assertive individual attitude and an inordinate self-conceit.”⁹¹

According to Atiyah, identification with the Arab East was as much a reaction against Western domination as it was an escape from the inferiority of the African background. Sudanese emphasized their Arab descent, excluding from their consciousness any association with Africa and the negroid elements, and they found great consolation in the renaissance of the Arab East. But as that renaissance had not much to offer in tangible terms, they sought comfort and encouragement in the past glory of the warlike Arabs who, inspired by their religion and the spirit of the Prophet, had swept victoriously through Christendom. “Had not the Arabs been the masters and teachers of the world when the now mighty Europeans were steeped in medieval night? Had they not translated Aristotle into Arabic and transmitted to the European barbarians the first gleams of the light of Greece? But the greatest consolation of all, the one beyond doubt and dispute, the safe and sure anchorage of their being was the knowledge that in their Book and Prophet they possessed the Ultimate Truth. In this serene knowledge they felt superior to all outsiders Truly that knowledge was a rock of comfort.”⁹²

Muddathir ‘Abd al-Rahim, a leading Islamist and northern expert on the South, confirms Atiya's observation by explaining that a dominant theme in the writings and verbal utterances of the literate northern Sudanese at that time was the need for unity and solidarity based on the principles of Islam and Arabism rather than on Sudanese nationalism. Having been defeated and humiliated by the Anglo-Egyptian forces, the Sudanese, he

explains, needed psychological reassurance, which they could not find in their past or in contemporary African identity. Instead of helping them to regain their lost self-confidence, Africa threatened to accentuate their feeling of inferiority

in comparison with both the British and the Egyptians. "Almost involuntarily, therefore, the Sudanese ... turned their backs on Africa and became passionately attached to the glorious past of Islam, which, together with the richness of classical Arabic culture and thought, provided the necessary psychological prod."⁹³

'Abd al-Rahim probes the psychological denial of the African dimension of Sudanese identity which the politically conscious northern Arab Muslim did not regard as a source of glorification or self-gratification. Their African present and past was to them a part of the so-called Jahiliyya, the Age of Ignorance or Darkness, with which they could therefore not identify themselves. Islam as a total system, "a religion, a civilization, a way of life, and a polity, was the central fact in life and the main object of loyalty. It was through its association with Islam that Arabism also had become a subject of pride, not only among the Arabs but throughout the Muslim world ... where ... people ... proudly explain their Arab connexions and ancestry (true or imagined) as well as their Islamic identity."⁹⁴

Another northern Sudanese scholar recently observed, "It was the citadel of Islamic culture that stood as a guarantee against the submersion of the Sudan in the jungles of the heathen Africa, the source of magazines and books that were the intelligentsias link with the world beyond, the cradle of the nationalist movement and its heroes."⁹⁵

The foremost northern specialist on the South, Muhammad Omar Bashir, observed that "Northern Sudanese generally identified themselves with the Arab world through ... Egypt ... the window through which they viewed the outside world." He then went on to explain that it was natural for them to do so, since "they were undoubtedly more Arab than African in their culture... . Besides, the Africans in the Southern Sudan, who were among the most backward peoples on the continent, could hardly inspire their Arab compatriots with any desire to identify with Africa."⁹⁶

Sandra Hale's Ph.D. study of the Nubians reveals intriguing inconsistencies in the way the Nubians identify themselves in relation to

thers.⁹⁷ The Nubians, are one of the northern ethnic groups that has had the longest history of contact with the outside world, but “took from the new situation only what [they] needed and wanted, rejected the remaining elements in favor of [their] own values,” and therefore succeeded remarkably in retaining their own sense of Nubian identity in spite of a degree of assimilation or integration.⁹⁸ These inconsisten-

cies in their perceptions reveal the psychological effect of the racial attitudes that have shaped northern Sudanese perception of themselves and of others over centuries of interaction with the incoming Arabs and Muslims. The result is a fusion of remnants of traditional Sudanese prejudices against the Arabs and a recognition of their superiority as the dominant military and political force — a very confusing outlook on the race and cultural issues. Hale's study is pertinent and important because the Nubians have had and continue to have a pivotal role in shaping Sudan's cultural profile, especially its relations with the Arab world. Geographically they are the closest Sudanese group to Egypt, and since independence they have shown a particular interest in foreign affairs. Hale's study shows that many Nubians attempt to be both the superior outsiders who came from elsewhere and the original owners of the land. Arabs and Nubians are described as both strangers or intruders by almost equal numbers of informants representing one group or the other. "A respondent would say at once that he had pure Arab ancestry and that his ancestors were the 'owners of the land' — an inconsistent historical situation, as he well knew. They are constantly balancing historical and current statuses and roles, moving the boundary markers in time and space."⁹⁹

In another context, Hale elaborated on the tension of identification with both the Sudanese origins and the supposedly foreign ancestry, explaining that some Halfawiyyin (Nubians from Halfa) consider themselves the "real Nubians," indigenous to the original Nuba area in Kordofan (Nuba Mountains), while others stress their mixture with Turks, Europeans, and Arabs among other races. Informants often referred to their group as "pure" and then boasted of their mixture with a "superior" race or group. Arab ancestry was both denied and claimed. Relationship with the blacks of the Nuba Mountains, among the ethnic groups least affected by Arabism, was both recognized and scorned. One informant first claimed to be 100 percent Nubian and then said that all Nubians had Arab blood.¹⁰⁰

What may not be obvious in this contradiction is that the real objection is not to mixing, for the infusion of Arab blood, while perhaps modifying the

ideal of purity, is nonetheless desirable. What is really being denied is “slave” blood, and there is hardly a northern family that can claim not to have had some share of the slave blood that flowed through the veins of masters' sons and daughters. As Salah Ahmed Ibrahim has so poignantly and poetically written:

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He lies who says in the Sudan

That I am pure

That my ancestry is not mixed

That my ancestry is not tainted

He is truly a liar.¹⁰¹

But in a highly though subtly racist society, where fiction and mental “passing” take the form of reality, there are many who would easily fantasize the purity of blood. One Nubian informant bragged to Hale, “We Mahas are freer than other Nubian groups By free I am referring to less mixing and, therefore, less slave mixture.”¹⁰² But he then expressed pride in the Nubians as the original Sudanese and described the immigrant Arabs as the “intruders.” “I don’t care so much about who the ‘real Nubians’ are; I am more interested in who the real Sudanese are; we Nubians are the real Sudanese; we consider the Arabs as houraba [strangers] and dukhala [intruders].”¹⁰³ Obviously in his scheme of things, the South, from which came the slaves, is outside the real Sudan.

Nubians’ pride in their own identity is well known throughout the North, where the case of a young non-Nubian diplomat from the Ja’ali tribe whose successful proposal of marriage to the daughter of a senior Nubian diplomat is often cited both as an exception and as an illustration of the Nubians’ rigid opposition to giving their daughters to non-Nubians. One respondent confessed to Hale with pride: “One thing you have to understand is that we are fanatic racists [unsorriyyin, sing. unsorri]. That, plus our language is how we stay unchanged. For another thing, it is impossible for us to give our daughters to Sudanese! It never happens. Even if the man is the president of the country, we would prefer giving our daughters to a Halfawi who has not one tareefa [penny].”¹⁰⁴

Hale’s interviews with the Nubians revealed the “highly developed chauvinism of the Halfawiyyin.” But she sees this as a defensive rather than an inherent prejudice: “Some of their behavior is a reaction to their stranger status; to their earlier inferior roles in Egypt and, to some extent, in the Sudan; and to the threat to their identity by the loss of the homeland. But it is also a result of recent success, a swaggering attitude towards their position vis-à-vis their numbers. All of these factors

towards their position vis-a-vis their numbers. All of these factors contribute to an attitude like Halfawi haj Abdalla's: 'We are fanatic racists.' If such a statement is true, it is a result, not a cause."¹⁰⁵

Along with the “racist” complex is also a deep rooted fear that is increasingly coming to the surface with the rising tide of black Sudanese nationalism. This fear is bred from the realization that it is indeed the Arab who migrated to the Sudan, that the indigenous population has suffered considerable indignities from the racial grading that favored the Arab-Islamic identity and that the ultimate triumph of Arabism and Islam was accomplished at the cost of degrading self-denial and eventual elimination through assimilation. As a Kenuz Nubian said to Hale, “We are not ‘real Nubians’; we are Arabs. Our grandfathers came from the east — some from Saudi Arabia like my grandfather. In my view all those people who are not Southerners are not Sudanese. The real Nubians are the Nuba of the West All of the people of the northern Sudan are intruders.”¹⁰⁶

What makes the northern attitudes reviewed in the foregoing pages significant to North-South relations is that they are not isolated individual aberrations or mere relics of a long-dead system of racial stratification and discrimination in northern Sudanese circles. They represent racist attitudes that are still pertinent to how the Arabs view the Blacks in the Sudan today. Recent studies have shown that derogatory and discriminatory attitudes about slavery and racial classifications are still rampant. One of the reasons for the persistence of the concept of slavery as a social phenomenon may be that at the reconquest, the British decided not to abolish the practice hastily but instead to discourage it gradually. Slaves were indeed encouraged to stay with their masters as “servants.” As Gabriel Warburg has noted, “The end of slavery was therefore a gradual process which came about as a result of economic, rather than moral, reasons once wage-earning labor became more easily accessible.”¹⁰⁷

Talal Asad, writing on contemporary Kababish society observed, “Apart from immediate members of the family, dependents may include domestic menials and herders. The latter may be of slave origin or free Domestic menials are always of slave origin and are never employed on a contractual basis.”¹⁰⁸

Ian Cunnison wrote on the Baggara of Southern Kordofan, who border the Dinka, that although domestic slavery was supposed to have been formally abolished in 1924, the practice has informally persisted.

Describing the situation in one group, the Iyal Ganis, he noted that many of their domestic slaves had remained with them voluntarily after the formal abolition of slavery. The status of a slave was incorpo-

rated into the kinship system so that a slave was perceived as his owner's son, and a freed slave became a brother. The continuation of the practice is underscored by the fact that ceremonies of liberation continued to take place after the official abolition of the system. The ceremony consisted of a declaration by the owner, after which the freed man rode around the neighborhood on horseback and was applauded. He would receive presents of money or livestock, some of which he used for a sacrifice in celebration of his freedom. Once liberated, a male slave and his offspring were considered Arabs and full members of the section or the tribe. The offspring of an unliberated male was a slave who could be inherited like his slave father, but a female slave, though never liberated, could be taken as a concubine by her owner, and her children would then be free-born even though she herself remained a slave. Her owner might decide to marry her off to another slave, in which case their offspring were slaves.¹⁰⁹

After enumerating in considerable detail who was who in the camp and of what social position, especially the status of their slave background, Cunnison explained that descendants of slaves, even though ceremonially freed, never fully enjoy the privileges that the Arabs do. Although the degree might differ from one individual to another, the knowledge of non-Arab descent implies the lower status of descent from a slave. Paradoxically the descendant of what is regarded as a "good" Dinka, who had never been enslaved or descended from a slave, is regarded as having better social standing than the offspring of freed slaves. The descendants of a slave, even if freed, are still called "slaves," or melkiya, owned property, behind their backs. And of course they have difficulty marrying or courting free-born women.¹¹⁰

Accounts of proverbs and social values among the Nuri people of the Shaigiya in the Northern Province recorded by Ahmed al-Shahi also reveal similar attitudes. After giving the breakdown of the population in a village into Nuri people, Arabs, abid (slaves), and Halab, al-Shahi says: "Although slavery was abolished after the re-occupation of the Sudan, the 'abid still have obligations towards their ex-masters On social occasions such as marriages, circumcisions, funerals, etc., the labid

render help and their presence is expected. Publicly and directly, Nuri people do not refer to the 'abid as such, but in private they may refer to an individual as 'our slave,' abidna."¹¹¹ The social stigma attached to abid has led the younger generation to leave the village and seek residence and employment in the big towns.

These attitudes persist as part of a traditional system of values and institutions that was modified but never radically transformed by the modern nation-state system. One of the factors that contributes to the political ascendancy of the National Islamic Front is that it has begun to alter the traditional basis of the postulated national identity that is often associated with sectarian political parties, and which rested on descent, lineage, and race, to one that is more focused on religion and therefore ostensibly nonracial. Indeed, the Islamic Charter of the NIF, which reflects the groups philosophy and constitutional principles, "accepts the ideal of Arab unity, but only if it is based on Islam, rejecting the nationalist base as 'racist.'"112

In this respect, the manifest ideals of the National Islamic Front are in conformity with the principles originally enunciated by the Prophet. The Arab cultural pattern of assimilating non-Arabs into a status of equal identification with the patrilineal kin was sanctioned and encouraged by the injunctions of the Prophet, who is said to have declared: "The son of a white woman is not superior to the son of a black woman; whichever of them fears God more, fares better."113 And even Arabic did not elevate one Muslim above non-Arabic-speaking Muslims, for, as the Prophet is reported to have said, "An Arabic speaker is no better than one who is not; it is the fear of God that counts."

These principles of subordinating race and language or culture to the higher virtues of being a good Muslim and even wider to the fear of God are elaborated by Jamal Muhammad Ahmed in the historical context of individual experiences that reveal both the racial tensions in Arab society despite assimilation and the ideals of Islam, which postulated full equality: "Salim, Abu Hudhaifa's man, the freed slave, took on his master's own name, because, when freed, he was unable to trace a father; he married Fatima, his ex-master's niece, the daughter of al-Walid Ibn Utba, one of the staunch enemies of Muhammad. Salim lived long enough to leave his mark on Islamic scholarship; Omar, the second Caliph is known to have said, "Had he lived, I would have named him successor.' And Omar was no braggart. He named Suhaib Ibn Sinan, another black man, as Imam, in the interregnum, between his death and

the election of the new leader, knowing full well that Suhaib's enunciation was not good enough.”¹¹⁴

In a spirit reflecting the Nilotic and Northern tribal principles of leadership and conflict resolution where a mediating leader takes the side of the party more removed from him in relational terms in order

to be more credible and capable of resolving the conflict and reconciling the conflicting parties, the Caliph Omar is said to have given these guidelines to the college of six electors, who would name a successor to him: "O, Aly, if the choice fall upon thee, see that thou shalt not exalt the house of Hashim, above their fellows. And thou, Othman, if thou art elected, or Sa'ad, beware that thou set not thy kinsmen over the necks of men. Arise, go forth, deliberate, and then decide."¹¹⁵

Here Jamal's testimony bows to authenticity and quotes the Arabic text of a "famous verse," which I have informally translated, "Today, I have fulfilled your religion."¹¹⁶ "By mid seventh century (Omar died 644) social and political equality was part of the armour of Islam. There were by then provincial governors from the black race, military generals and teachers of renown. Usama, Bilal, Suhaib, Ammar, Khabbab and others, had laid the foundations of the social and political attitudes of the Muslims, leaving to their kith and kin thereafter to share in the ups and downs, this pure theory had to countenance in future years. Muhammad's triumphant re-entry into Mecca symbolised it for all to see; Bilal and Usama rode by his side and the famous verse ['Today, I have fulfilled your religion'] sealed a long struggle to affirm the oneness of man."¹¹⁷

But religious ideals are always above performance, guiding, challenging, and judging human shortcomings. And so, despite their rhetorical commitment to the Islamic ideals, the Muslim Brotherhood, at least the dominant wing of the movement, driven by politics more than by religious piety and idealism, finds itself in a dilemma: Should it emphasize Islam and embrace the pious Muslim without the racial strings of Arabism and the Arabic language and culture attached, as is the case in most African Muslim countries, or should it link Islam with Arabism and manipulate its composite racial-ethnic-cultural components in the appeal to the Arab-Islamic world to assist in the confrontation with the secularists and the non-Arab elements of the Sudan? There is no doubt that all the major political factions with an Islamic base and agenda have built their programs on the latter. This has brought the issue of religion into the racial and ethnic politics of identity behind the conflict.¹¹⁸

However, given the racial and cultural anomalies of the Sudan and its marginalization between the Arab and African worlds, severe tensions persist even among the northern Sudanese regarding the identity of the country. For that reason, enormous intellectual and material en-

ergies are spent on justifying the status quo in favor of Arabism, even though efforts are always made to balance it with rhetorical references to Africanism, usually defined in geographical terms, which, in contrast with Arabism, evokes no nationalist sentiments. The ambivalences, ambiguities, and tensions entailed in the efforts to balance and harmonize historically conflictual and now competing national identities are reflected in a rambling statement from the Conference of National Dialogue on the Political System in August 1990.¹¹⁹ The document presents ideals and aspirations as statements of facts: the Sudan is both Arab and African without the least tension or conflict involved; the experience of the Sudan is one of unity of purpose and progress, oblivious of trivialities; religion is essential to all aspects of life and is a source of peace and unity rather than of conflict; the only problem with the past was the failure of sectarian political parties who could not realize their "stated nationalist objectives," presumably Islamic, because of their differences on the lesser issues of sectarian interests. Denial has been a conspicuous aspect of the Sudanese conflict of identities. Without a realistic view of the national crisis of identity its resolution is naturally evaded.

Magdi Amin, a northerner of Nubian-Arab descent, alludes to the psychological dimensions of northern ambivalences between Arabism and Africanism, which he describes as a "neurosis." The credibility of this self-appraisal is enhanced by the fact that Amin comes from a mainstream Nubian family of considerable accomplishment on the national level: his own father served as a leading educator and the cultural attaché in Washington in the 1960s. "I do believe the problem of identity is of great importance because the South has been forced to endure the neurosis of the North trying to decide whether it is African or Arab The reference points for the Northerners have always been in the Middle East, actually more Arab than even the Egyptians. Ultimately it is a neurosis I think the North — just as they are looked upon as second class citizens ... [in the Arab world] have come to emulate that ... and see whoever is South of them as second class."¹²⁰

Mansour Khalid appears to support Magdi Amin's perspective on the

northern psyche:

The reason [for northern identification with Arabism] stems from an inferiority complex really. The Northern Sudanese is torn internally in his Arab-African personality. As a result of his Arabic Is-

Islamic cultural development, he views himself in a higher status from the other Sudanese not exposed to this process. Arabism gives him his sense of pride and distinction and that is why he exaggerates when he professes it. He becomes more royal than the king, so to speak.

Yet the Arab which this Northern Sudanese wants to be like looks down on him because the latter has specific images of his own culture. Today in Lebanon and in the East, the name given to blacks is slaves. Even peanuts are called "slaves." In Africa, the Lebanese living there call Africans slaves. They do not mean this literally, but the word is associated with color. This is the problem of the Sudanese Northerner who when faced with this reality overcompensates in order to alleviate his feelings of inferiority. Thus, his reaction would be that [Eastern Arab] is merely an 'Arabi," while we are of purer Arabic stock and of an older civilization. For example, in the case of the Egyptians, Northern Sudanese often speak of them as sons of Halaba.¹²¹

Another Sudanese scholar, Abdullahi Ahmed Ibrahim, in a research project on the subject of the northern Sudanese hybrid identity, wrote: "The northern Sudanese is a sign caught at the cross-roads of different traditions and landscapes. He is black and a Muslim claiming to be an Arab. Unluckily he embodies the three identities most repugnant to Eurocentric discourse. In view of this discourse he is a zero-sum; jack of all inferior identities, master of none On the northern Sudanese lay most of the blame for his isolation in sub-Saharan Africa. In his uneasiness with his confused identities he made himself appear an uncompromising bigot in the eyes of Africans and Black Americans for causing, or engaging in, the endless civil war in the Southern Sudan."¹²²

Ahmed Nasr identifies three trends in the literary debate on the question of whether the Sudan is Arab, African, or Afro-Arab: "The first concentrates on the study of Arab elements, the second on Afro-Arab elements, and the third on the African elements overlooked by the first trend. The third trend, though in its infancy casts some doubts on the unquestioned idea of the Arabism of the Sudan taken for granted by the first trend."¹²³

Citing the work of Abdullah Abd al-Rahman al-Darir as an example of the Arab-oriented school, Ahmed Nasr intimates that Darir de-

fended northern Sudanese traditions against “those who looked down upon” them by providing as “evidence for [their] nobility” the fact that “they were Arabic in origin.”¹²⁴ According to Ahmed Nasr, Dirar's desire was “to prove the Arabism of the Sudan and rule out all doubts concerning this fact and thus reject the thesis which holds that the people of the Sudan are Beja, Negroes, and Nuba. The author's evidence for the Arabism of the Sudan is that the traditions, customs, games, ways of dress and proverbs are identical to those of Arabia.”¹²⁵

Another author cited in defense of Sudan's Arabism is Abd al-Magid Abdin, who defined the term “Arab” as a person who speaks the Arabic language, relying on the Prophet's saying that “Arabism is inherited neither through father nor mother; it is the ‘tongue’; he who speaks Arabic is an Arab.”¹²⁶ Abdin added the feeling of Arab nationalism as a factor in Arab identity. The debate to which Abdin was contributing had been triggered by the imminent independence and the need to decide whether the Sudanese were Arabs, part of the Arab world, and therefore should join the Arab League, or Africans and therefore should look to Africa south of the Sahara. Abdin was amazed that the issue was even raised since being Arab was a higher status, which less-qualified Africans were aspiring to join: “Is it not astonishing that the Africans want to be arabized while we who speak Arabic want to be africanized?”¹²⁷ Ironically Abdin asserted Sudan's Arabism without reference to the non-Arab Sudanese, even though a central factor in the debate on identity was the conflict between the North and the South and in particular the claim of the southerners that they were racially culturally, linguistically and religiously different from the North.

As a reaction to the overemphasis on Arabism, a new school of folklorists, led by Sayyid Hurreiz, began to assert the Afro-Arab identity of the Sudan. Hurreiz substantiated his thesis through an analysis of folktales, concluding that both Arab and African elements are reflected in the northern Sudanese culture.¹²⁸

The third trend, which presents the Sudan as African, is illustrated by the work of yet another folklorist, Ahmed al-Mutasim al-Sheikh, who studied

the folktales of the Rubatab ethnic group of the Northern Province. He concentrates on three elements: the social system, linguistic evidence in the names of places and people, and religious and non-religious beliefs.¹²⁹

Perhaps a more comprehensive perspective, which indicates the racial categorization and stratification of the various Sudanese peoples

and the discriminatory sentiments in favor of Arabism, is offered by Na'um Shuqayr, a Lebanese who originally went to the Sudan with Kitchener's army in 1898 and who wrote about the customs of the Sudanese people according to their races. He classified the peoples of the Sudan as the blacks, in which group he included the inhabitants of the southern Sudan, Southern Kordofan (the Nuba), and Southern Darfur; the semiblack, that is, the people of Darfur, the Fellata from West Africa, the Nubians of northern Sudan, the Beja in the East; and the Arabs, who include the Shayqiyya, the Ja'aliyyin, and others. Shuqayr spoke highly of the last group, the Arabs. "According to him, they are the most generous, most intelligent and most civilized of the whole population. This group, he added, migrated to the Sudan after the revelation of Islam; they trace their origin back to the Hashimite family to which the Prophet belonged Shuqayr did not consider speaking Arabic and believing in Islam sufficient reasons for considering the Nubians and the Beja as Arabs. At the same time he intentionally or unintentionally neglected the fact that the people whom he called 'Arabs' are the offspring of the Arabs and the indigenous people."¹³⁰ With what must be classic understatement, Ahmed Nasr observes that "His statement that they are Arab in origin, and that the coarseness of their hair and blackness of their skins are due to the climate is inconclusive."¹³¹

If the South did not figure in the northern equation, the problem of identity and the dilemmas it poses for the North would have been localized to that part of the country, although even there with some scrutiny an awakening might eventually occur. Likewise, if the South had remained at the tribal phase of tradition, it might have been too weak in the transitional and the modern phases to pose a challenge to the Arab-Islamic agenda of the contemporary northern scene. If southerners had been a minority population sprinkled throughout the country among the Arab majority, like the Coptic population of Egypt or the blacks of America, their challenge to the attitudes of the mainstream population or to the unity of the country would also have been more constrained. The reality is that the North has to contend with a national partner that not only is indigenously African, but occupies a separately definable territory, with a tribal vision that has

now extended considerably into the more coherent and broader concept of Africanism. It is also a group whose modern identity complemented by Christianity and Western culture during the transitional phase, isb

now consolidating itself into the demand for a new, democratic, secular Sudan in which race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or gender will not be discriminating factors in public life. That there are still forces within the South that call for secession does not invalidate but indeed underscores the national crisis of identity. Unity and separation are now in a delicate balance.

Northern Sudanese identification with Arabism is both racial and cultural, with Islam as a central ingredient. There is therefore an element of racism in the subjective identity of the North that must be acknowledged if it is to be remedied. And in exposing it and finding a remedy to it, two lines of normative arguments are open to the participant observer or scholar. One is to say that even if the northern Sudanese consider themselves racially Arab, what counts is that they should not act in a racist way to the disadvantage of the non-Arabs. The other line of approach, which this study favors, is that since the realities of the northern Sudanese identity leave a gap between self-perception and objective factors, the first step toward remedying the national identity problem is to question the validity of the claim. This would demonstrate that the assumed racial cleavage on which sentiments of prejudice and discrimination are predicated is baseless and that even on racial grounds, there is a uniqueness to the Sudanese identity that can provide a uniting framework.

Both lines of argument are of course difficult to make and to accept. One is telling the northern Sudanese not to act in a manner that reflects their racial sentiments, which are inherently stratifying, as postulates for the national identity. It is not easy to sever deep-rooted sentiments about self from influencing perceptions of the nation dominated by the group entertaining those sentiments. The alternative is to say that those sentiments are not founded on reality, which contradicts the assumptions of self-perceptions. If those self-perceptions were entertained in an isolated, monolithic framework, the illusions involved would be of no consequence to others. But as they dominate the shared arena of the nation-state and try to impose themselves on others, they cannot be left unchallenged. And since the challenge is for the greater cause of peace,

unity and nation building, seeking the truth and acting on it can only be an enhancement of personal and collective human dignity, operationally defined as a concept of increased and broadened productivity and distribution. If northerners, however, should feel that their self-perception as Arabs, justified or not, represents an authentic

identity that they cannot discard and should not be asked to discard, and if in addition they believe that their Arab-Islamic identity ought to be the sole basis for nation building, fairness and justice dictate that they should not, and indeed cannot, impose that on the South and must therefore accept the partition of the country.

Chapter 11 Perceptions of the Crisis

Since identity is largely subjective, individual self-perceptions can provide useful insights into the critical issues involved in the crisis of identity in the Sudan. This chapter focuses on the perceptions of the Sudanese on the basic issues in the national identity crisis, using mostly material from tape-recorded interviews with northern and southern scholars, intellectuals, and politicians, both inside and outside the country.¹ The questions asked were uniform, focusing on several major themes: whether the civil war in the Sudan is a conflict of Arab-Islamic and African-Christian-Animist identities; what is the true identity of the country; what are the bases for determining such identity; how reflective of the internal composition of the country is the current official identification; if not, what identity would be more reflective of the configuration of the country; what obstacles, with whose responsibility, block the reformation and adoption of a uniting identity; whether those obstacles can be overcome to foster a sense of identity that is more representative of the country in all its configurations. If the answers were in the affirmative, what strategies might be adopted to overcome those obstacles? They were allowed to make any other comments they wished on the issues of national identity.

The views varied widely. Some people acknowledged that there was indeed a crisis of identity. Others expressed skepticism about the imputation of a crisis, but substantiated it nonetheless. Some of those who acknowledged the problem placed the responsibility on the Muslim fundamentalists, specifically the National Islamic Front (NIF). Others defended the Arab-Islamic identity of the majority of the country primarily in the North. Although the NIF tends to be associated with the Arab-Islamic identity, some of its members are beginning to reflect a new trend that calculatngly downplays Arab affiliation in favor of a uniquely Sudanese identity. Views also ranged widely on proposed solutions, with northerners generally preferring the framework of unity, and most southerners discreetly or overtly advocating partition.

Whether or not this dichotomy can be bridged is the central question facing the Sudan.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE CRISIS

Those who admit that there is a crisis of national identity perceive it in two domestic contexts. One has to do with the dilemmas of the Arab-African composition of the North; the other concerns the African-Arab dualism of the country from a South-North perspective. These two contexts are of course mutually interactive, and in the modern, nation-state context, they tend to be conflictual.

Recognizing racial attitudes as a factor in the North-South conflict is difficult for the northern Sudanese, and denial has been their general reaction, even though some realism is beginning to emerge. A number of Sudanese who were interviewed on this issue revealed a degree of tension in recognizing the biological or racial basis of identity, dismissing it as a fiction, and asserting the cultural basis as a more constructive framework for national integration.

Abd al-Ghaffar, a development anthropologist, for instance, responding to a question about the basis for identity perception, observed: "I think in many ways, they are physical [racial]. What immediately comes to mind is the physical [characteristic or] resemblance [to the Arabs]. But he quickly added that the argument of physical resemblance between the Sudanese and other Arabs, for instance in Saudi Arabia, "does not [stand] ... because we have taken a lot from the Africans... . The Arabs of the Sudan are no longer able to claim that purity of race, and I think it is far-fetched to continue insisting that [the Sudanese] are Arabs." According to him, Sudanese try "to manipulate" the elements of language and religion in Saudi Arabia to reinforce their claim to be Arabs, "but it doesn't really work; it doesn't get you through!

And yet, Abdal-Ghaffar agrees with the general theory that Arabism. is cultural and not racial: "A number of southern Sudanese who have studied in Egypt, and are fluent in the Arabic language could present themselves easily as Arab and I think there is no reason whatsoever to

stop them from being categorized that way. In the northern Sudan as well you have a lot of indigenous Africans who could claim to be Arabs basically because of their culture not because of race! On the other

hand, speaking Arabic and conversion to Islam do not qualify one to be Arab in the eyes of the Sudanese if they are not supported by genealogical claims to Arab descent.

Muhammad al-Fateh of the Umma party combined refutation of the racial argument based on the physical makeup of the Sudan and the classic definition of Arabism on cultural grounds with an admission of the existence of problems, including racism. First, he explained northern identity in terms of interracial mixing: "In Sudan, I don't think that there is something particularly physical which determines if an ethnic group sees itself as Arab or not. These ethnic groups, after all, mixed with those groups that were in the Sudan in the first place so that the appearance may not be that of an Arab as such, but his language, culture, and traditions take on an Arab orientation. You cannot in Sudan pick out an Arab by his features." Al-Fateh argued that "it is essential to discuss the grievances of the Southerners frankly. Issues of religious, racial, economic, and cultural discrimination all have to be discussed... . If we can settle this problem, the future prosperity of the Sudan lies in the South."

A young woman who wanted to identify herself only as Aisha for reasons of security admits that there is racism in the Sudan and that the South has suffered from it. She attributes this racism to traditional sentiments of superiority and the resulting conflict to rising demands for equality in the South, which she recognizes as an aspect of the worldwide trend of modernity: "Racism differs from one country to another... . But the fundamental essence of it is ethnocentrism ... when you feel you are a better group than the others. This is prevalent all over the Sudan. But it is most evident between the North and the South. We cannot deny this... . The ideal of the modern nation is one of equal citizenship for everyone. This has not been realized in Sudan's modern history. In addition, all of the South as one block, and the North as another have a social barrier between them."

Southerners see no distinction between the subjective sentiments and the objective indicators of racial identification among the northerners.

Ambrose Riny Thiik, a southerner and former judge of the Court of Appeal, sees the differences between the North and the South in racial terms, but defines racial identities subjectively, even when the perceptions are unsupported by factual evidence. He therefore dismisses the use of the cultural argument, which seeks to refute the allegation that Arabism in the Sudan has a racial connotation:

The problem is in the mind, is it not? Physically there are no great differences. Yes, you will find very dark Arabs. But it is not a question of skin pigmentation or appearance. It is a question of what they are hung up with: In their mentality they are Arabs; in their mentality, they are superior; in their mind, you, the Black, the African, is abid [slave] and it remains to be so no matter what achievement you have accomplished. The feeling among the Blacks that this is unacceptable is expressing itself in terms of warfare and the rest of it ... I agree that there is no great physical difference; skin color is not that big a thing, but the thing is that in the mind."

Another southerner, David Mamer, a senior lecturer in the University of Juba, gave an almost identical response to the question of whether interpreting Arabism as a racial or a cultural phenomenon made a difference: "I don't think it does make a difference because it is just a state of mind. The state of mind is the most important thing because it is the one that moves you to act the way you want to act. Even if they are not physically Arabs and they have a very strong belief that they are Arabs, the result is always the same... . This is where the crisis of identity comes from. The fact that they have refused the reality of the resemblance with other Africans is actually an identity crisis for them."

A distinction should be made between the genealogically oriented concept, which may be said to rest on some notion of racial self-perception, and the Arabness of Pan-Arab nationalism. While the former is common among the rural communities of the North, the latter, as Crawford Young has noted, is associated with the urban elite.²

The point is underscored by Abdalla al-Tayeb, a leading Arabist scholar, who distinguishes popular Arabism of the tribal system from the politicized Arabism that is part of the modern Pan-Arab nationalism. Abdalla al-Tayeb considers the first to be authentic and solidly grounded in Arab genealogies that he asserts are meticulously traced and scrutinized for asl, purity or originality; the second he regards as new, politically motivated, and externally generated. Addressing the political Pan-Arab movement he said, "Definitely, Arabism in the nationalist sense

is quite a new thing. It is a new nationalism, influenced by new ideas taken from Europe. The sense of racial superiority propagated by the Germans, the British, and the French triggered the feeling among the Arabs that we too have had our civilization. This appealed

to the new generation of educated people who forgot their angarebs [native beds] in the village and identified with the new aspiration.”

In contrast with this modern Arab nationalism, Abdalla al-Tayeb sees the local traditional concept of Arabism as tribally based. “Tribal Arabism is linked first to the tribe. ‘My tribe is better than your tribe.’ ... So, it is really a matter of personal identity.” Aisha offered a similar analysis. “The history of the tribes in Sudan is that each tribe is ethnocentric and believes that its members are superior to others.”

But the traditional tribal sentiments in the North have been transcended by a sense of Arabness and Islam, which has united the northern community despite the persistent diversity of the tribes. Abdalla al-Tayeb believes that despite the preservation of tribal identities and the rivalries involved, many of the Arab tribes recognized a certain identity that surmounted their differences. “There was a feeling of vague alliance, but one that is different from this modern nationalism; it was a form of medieval affinity.”

Aisha agrees that all northern tribes have broadened their vision of identity along Arab-Islamic lines: “As integration and assimilation were accelerated between the tribes in the North, the elements involved were Islam and Arabness. They agree on this even though many tribes do not speak Arabic and some in the North are not definite about their Arab identity... . But it is true that many of them agree on their Arab roots.”

Both Abdalla al-Tayeb and Aisha see these tribes as essentially at peace with their local Sudanese Arab identity. In their opinion, the modern crisis of national identity is more a creation of the political elites reaching out to the Arab world than a national mass phenomenon. In the words of Abdalla al-Tayeb, “The people at large do not really recognize themselves as similar to the Saudis or the Iraqis ... or even to the Egyptians... . There is more similarity [with certain parts of Africa]... . Sudanese in Chad and in Kanu and so on ... feel more at home there.”

Ironically this sentiment has also been heard recently from members of the NIF, who seek to downplay the divisive elements of identity for which

the NIF, who seek to downplay the divisive elements of identity for which they are being held responsible, Islam and Arabism. Presumably, while seeking benefits from their Arab affiliation they see that close association with Arabism often prevents them from spreading the Islamic message in Africa. Playing it down is therefore a tactic for advancing Islam southward to Black Africa. This point was remarkably

revealed by the Islamic scholar Abdelwahab el-Affendi in a penetrating review of a political novel on the crisis of identity in the Sudan.³ After stating that the book had succeeded in exploding the myth of Sudanese racial identity, el-Affendi argues that the only explanation left for the anti-Islamic attitude of the South is prejudice against Islam, which is of course unjustified. The implication is that the spread of Islam would be facilitated by being freed from Arab racism and anti-Islamic prejudice.

Ali al-Haj Muhammad is a Muslim from Darfur and a member of the NIE. He has acted as a government spokesman, and he negotiates with rebel factions for the Bashir regime. On the subject of identity in the Sudan, he argued, "If someone said that Sudan is Islamic or Arabic, we think that is not the correct description of our identity. And in practice, in Sudan we are Africans but we do not look like other Africans; it is not like the Africans in West or East Africa. We are different, but we are Africans. Fair enough, some of us speak Arabic, but we are different from the Arabs. That is another point. We are also, some of us, Muslims, but we are not the same as other Muslims. If we take even the other Arab countries, or Muslim countries, the behavior of the Sudanese is different, and that I think is the result of their identity which came out through history." Ali al-Haj is clearly uncomfortable discussing the issue of identity. In his opinion the identity question has little relevance. "That is how I see it. But again I say this is a very academic question, very intellectual; in reality I can't see in practice [that] it is an issue."

Members of the educated class who have experienced racial discrimination in the Arab world overwhelmingly reveal more tension than is reported of their traditional compatriots in Africa. The anthropologist Abd al-Ghaffar Muhammad Ahmed, who has had considerable professional experience inside the Sudan and abroad, gave a personal illustration: "I went to Saudi Arabia and was outright rejected as an Arab. I was always told, 'You are an African. Even though you speak Arabic, profess Islam, and go to the Mosque, you are still ... African.'" In comparison, he reports that in Africa he was often mistaken for an Ethiopian, a Nigerian, or generally identified as African, and never taken for an Arab. "I am in fact very proud of that," he remarked, referring to his

identification as an African.

Muhammad Bashir Mahmoud, an international civil servant with the Organization of African Unity, had a similar experience. “I lived in

the Gulf for fifteen years and two years in Jordan,” he said. “Despite the fact that many of the Sudanese there were of different hues, colors, no one mistook us for anything else but Sudanese.” Simon, a southern Sudanese who had also been to the Gulf, reported, “I was in the Gulf for almost four years and moved around there. We, the Sudanese in the Gulf, are not accepted as Arabs. How can we come back home and pretend that we are Arabs?” Abbas Abdal-Karim Ahmed, an economist who served as lecturer at Juba University in southern Sudan and later worked in the Gulf and in Europe, offered an insightful analysis of the dynamics of the various considerations, both subjective and objective:

Sudanese more and more realize that we are different from the Arabs, especially those of us who go to the Gulf. I went through the same experience. They come back understanding very much how different they are. Of course, they benefit and like to identify themselves as Arabs, because otherwise they might not be permitted to stay there. But deep in themselves they see that they are different. Many of the Sudanese migrants who went there had never met Arabs before. They find that in fact they are very different from them, not only racially but even culturally and socially. When they come back, I don't believe they look forward to being identified with the Arabs. Of course, there are always the economic variables. If they see that this is going to enhance their position as individuals or as groups they might continue to identify with the Arabs.

Aisha confirmed the theme of Sudanese discovery in the Arab world: “People have traveled outside the country and have visited Arab and European countries, and they have found that they are Sudanese first and foremost, not Arabs and not Africans. This is the crux of the matter.” Another young woman, Sawson Muhammad Ibrahim Khalil, whose mixed parentage — a Sudanese father and an Egyptian Coptic mother — makes her look more like a Middle Eastern Arab than most northerners, observed a similar attitude in Kuwait: “When some of us were studying in Kuwait University, we would meet Kuwaitis who on hearing us speak would ask us if we were speaking Arabic. When we answered ‘Yes,’ they would ask us if we were Arabs. We would respond by saying we were Sudanese, not Arabs. They also do not identify us as Arabs. They call us

Sudanese.”

This shift away from overt identification with Arabism may be some-

what generational in nature. Divisions within the Arab world and its failure to consolidate around one vision and one voice have left younger Sudanese without a clear cultural exemplar. Abu Bakr al-Shingeiti, a northern intellectual and a member of NIF, spoke to this point,

Let me just take my own sense of self. I don't feel that much of an Arab looking at the present realities and the Arab world. There isn't much of pride or satisfaction in identifying oneself as an Arab. That is not saying I can devoid myself of historical influences that came from Arab history, the Arab world, the Arab race, whatever it is. But identity is consciousness. If your awareness of being an Arab is not that strong, and you don't identify yourself positively — and identifying means not just [presenting] yourself verbally but [acting] upon it politically; culturally or socially — if you don't do that, then you are not much of an Arab, African, Muslim or whatever it is.

When we say we are not Arabs, we are not Africans, we would like to present ourselves as Sudanese. That is meaningful... . That may not [have been] the case at a different moment where among older generations of Sudanese politicians identifying oneself as an Arab meant something for them, for the outside world, for the identity of the country, for its potential future. Or for those who identify themselves as Africans. They saw this bright future of the continent which [was] just coming out of colonialism, and there were all these aspirations and the heroes from Nkrumah [and] all those. So there was pride in being an African and looking for identity [there]. All that has been crushed with the realities of what happened to Africa, what happened to the Arab world. We still have hope in Sudan with all the conflict, with all the strife, and this is why we take pride in being Sudanese. That is our cultural refuge.

Beyond the issue of how northern Sudanese perceive themselves and are perceived, the most critical aspect of the identity crisis is this contest of the national identity. Malwal Leek, a scholar and politician, articulated the identity crisis resulting from the dualism of northern and national African-Arab cleavage: "The nature of the problem which is facing the Sudan has [several] components. One component is that

national culture is understood as Islamic and Arabic. This on the other hand has invited a response from those who have different cultural identities which are together described as African. There are also those who believe that they have acquired another cultural identity through the Christian religion adapted to the African way of life. These groups are resenting the definition of the national identity as Islamic and Arabic. Their resistance is expressed in various ways. The current war has this element imbedded in it.”

Abd al-Ghaffar Muhammad Ahmed, the anthropologist, urged that: “It is very important for the future of the country to come to grips with this whole issue of who we are. Rather than use the labels Afro-Arabs, or Arabs, or Africans, we should acknowledge that we are Sudanese first and that has its own characteristics. Some of them are indigenous African, and some of them have come from other parts of the continent or even from outside the continent. All have mixed to create a new thing. That thing I would call Sudanese. It is for our benefit politically to utilize that thing. It is high time that we inject this into our educational system so that our children can build on this Sudanese character.”

The quest for a pluralistic identity inevitably goes back to questioning the myth that the Sudanese are Arabs. Muhammad Omar Bashir questioned the classification of the North as Arab. “All this time we have considered ourselves Arabs without question... . Today the NIF are testing our Arab and Muslim affiliation and exploiting our own conviction that we are Arabs par excellence... . To resolve this, some of us are going back and saying that we are not Muslims and not Arabs.”

Khalid Yagi, a medical academic and president of the National Alliance for National Salvation, which was instrumental in Nimeiri's overthrow, echoed the same opinion. “[Even] culturally we are Africans. We can say that we are Arabic-speaking Africans. Being Arabic-speaking, I don't think defines one as Arab. The Americans speak English; they are not English. Australians speak English; they are not English. So, we shouldn't confuse these things. To be realistic, let us just sit on the ground and say we are Africans: We are Arabic-speaking, we are Muslims and we are

Christians; that is the basis.”

Agreeing with the argument that the Sudan's Arabness is reinforced by dependence on Arab sources of support, Yagi went on to say, “The Arabs are dominating because they are [supporting] us now. The Sudan is a very poor country. We are depending on help. Those in power

want to identify themselves with this source so that they can keep the flow of these benefits.” As a result of these externally oriented manipulations, Yagi believes that there is no consistency in Sudanese perceptions of their identity. “One day we are Africans when conditions are right. Tomorrow, we are Arabs when we are in the Arab atmosphere. This is what is really harming the Sudan. We have not set our identity.”

Muhammad al-Fateh of the Umma party concedes that northern identification with Arabism is, in significant part, the result of economic dependence. “I do believe that our dependence on the Arab world allowed people to identify with Arabness more than anything else, to our great misfortune.” Recognizing that “the problem of identity is a fundamental one, in the Sudan,” he postulates a solution that would accommodate the differences: “It is for the educated Sudanese ... to show the people that the Sudan brings together all races, whether African or Arab... . We want people all over to say they are Sudanese despite their ethnicity or race. The situation can change if everyone plays this role in his own home and if the schools teach courses dealing with national education.”

Even more than the northerners, Southerners see the national crisis of identity in the identification of the country with Arabism and Islam where the reality is more pluralistic, if not predominantly African. This point is espoused by the SPLM-SPLA, which poses a formidable challenge to Arab-Islamic hegemony in the Sudan. Stephen Madut Baak, an SPLA officer who represents the movement in the United Kingdom, remarked: “The issue of identity in the Sudan is actually the root cause of the civil war. Sudan is a multiracial, multireligious country. It has no parallel in Africa. Although some people compare it to Nigeria, that is not correct, because all the Nigerians in the first place are Africans, except that they are multireligious, Muslims as well as Christians. Sudan has African and Arab nationalities.”

The leader of the movement, John Garang, in his address to the Koka Dam meeting in March 1986 between the SPLM-SPLA and various political factions from the North, explained the national identity crisis by

focusing on the northern assertion of Arabism and Islam and the southern reaction to them: "Our major problem is that Sudan has been looking and is still looking for its soul; for its true identity. Failing to find it Sudanese take refuge in Arabism; failing this they find refuge in Islam as a uniting factor. Others get frustrated as they fail to see how they could become Arabs when their Creator thought otherwise.

And they take refuge in separation. In all this there is a lot of mystification and distortion to suit the various sectarian interests... . There is no sharpness in our identity; we need to throw away this sectarianism and look deep inside our country.”⁴

Mansour Khalid, who was one of the most instrumental personalities behind the Addis Ababa Agreement and now is one of the very few northern Sudanese members of the SPLM, explains the complex interplay of the traditional and the transitional phases in the politics of sectarianism and the modern forces that are challenging them.

For 30 years, and for reasons of myopia, ignorance, and unenlightened self-interest on the part of the Sudanese ruling elite, Sudan's national identity has been obscured and distorted. By “ruling elite” I refer to the politicized Arab/Islamic rulers coming from the urban and semiurban centers of the northern and central Sudan in Khartoum, White Nile, Gezira, and Kordofan provinces, which exert a political and economic hegemony over the marginalized social and cultural groups living in the rural and outlying regions of the country, including some parts of the geographic north. It is this ruling elite which alone has had the power to make and break governments, to mold public opinion, to tackle head-on the challenge of achieving unity in diversity, and to articulate a genuine vision of Sudan to the outside world.⁵

Khalid's definitions of the “ruling elite” and the backgrounds of its members are pertinent to the declared objective of the SPLM-SPLA to champion the cause of the marginalized regions, including the South, the West, and the East, most of which also belong to non-Arab racial or ethnic groups. This goal of inclusive justice has won support for the movement in the North to a degree that is also a liability in the eyes of those southerners more concerned with the plight of their own region, which is clearly the most disadvantaged. The perspective of al-Tigani al-Tayeb, a veteran politician of leftist orientation, is a good indicator of both the movement's support from the North and the risk that the southern cause will spread itself too thin by taking on the national grievances of all the marginalized groups. “I agree with the SPLA-SPLM in that I do not

think there is such a thing as a 'southern problem.' The entire Sudan has problems and is backward, and while the situation in the South is more drastic, similar situations can be found in the West, the Nuba mountains, the East, and even in Northern Su-

dan. There is an imbalance in development that has allowed for these problems. As time has progressed, this unevenness has increased rather than subsided."

According to al-Tayeb, the reason why the South took to armed struggle and the others did not is that the South had no adequately developed political organizations to promote its cause by peaceful political means. "Each depressed region reacted against the situation differently. In the North people protested via political parties, professional unions, and other social movements in the country... . In the South, because there was no political movement comparable to those in the North, and there is little press, political activity was weak. They had no choice but to enter the bush. Guerrilla warfare was the best option as Southerners saw it."

Hassan Abd al-Ati, assistant professor of geography at the University of Khartoum, also sees the problem of identity in terms of competing economic interests. While he suggests that attention should be focused on economic rather than on identity issues, he in fact ends up discussing identity. "I think the issue of identity has been used by both those who seek to exploit the situation as well as the very victims of the situation. Ultimately I think economic interests are the things that govern the relationships between the different social groups and the political bodies. The same things that are separating the North and the South should in my view be the same things separating the Beja in the east and the Nuba from the rest of the country and so on." Abdal-Ati is of the opinion that valuable time should not be wasted dealing with the issues of identity rather than confronting the critical problem of distribution. "I don't think people should waste time trying to think about what we are. Rather, the question should be what we want to do and what we want to be. Personally, I see myself as African by birth; at the same time I have aspirations which link me to the Arab world. So my identification with either group is ... as much as it is beneficial to me, the one who made the choice." Ati's approach is typical of those who tend to fuse what is and what ought to be. This type of approach poses a dilemma: while identity does in fact influence distribution, the approach advocates focusing attention on distribution and discarding the significance of identity not as

a factor that should not count, but as one that does not in fact count.

Aisha advocates an approach to the roles of the elites and the masses that has similar normative ambiguities. Aisha saw the war as a conflict

between the elites in the North and the South competing for power and wealth. "The war between the South and the North is in fact a struggle for political power led by intellectuals from the South who are in themselves leaders of tribes. The fact that the traditional structures of these tribes have remained intact allows the utilization of tribal identities as instruments for this political struggle." Aisha's argument that these tribal identities exist and are therefore exploited by the political elites puts the cart before the horse. Ethnic diversity cuts across the South-North divide and cannot be reduced to any simple racial or cultural dualism between the North and the South. Again reflecting a perspective that combines what is desirable with what is in fact occurring, she argues that a new national identity is emerging in both the North and the South that is defying tribal identities. "The tribes continue to cling to their respective tribal areas. But the level of intermixing between them is not taken into account in the political structure. The leader of the Shilluk remains the leader of the Shilluk even if half of them have intermarried with the Dinka. My point is that in the South the towns are now mixed in a process that has developed into a Sudanese national character. This same process can be seen in al-Morada for example." What Aisha describes, then, is a process involving phases that makes her analysis correct in what it says, but incomplete in its coverage. For instance, she is right in her assertions that people are mixing, but tribal identities have not disappeared. Quite the contrary, they are still predominant territorially, culturally, and psychologically. The Shilluk who are still in Shillukland, together with those who have moved into towns or intermarried with the Dinka but have not been assimilated by the Dinka, still see themselves as Shilluk and recognize their king as the symbol of their identity. The result of the process Aisha describes may well be what she implicitly advocates, but the Sudan is still far from that detribalized vision.

Even the vision that Aisha postulates is by no means free from the elements that now divide the country. Although she does not make the point explicitly, she insinuates that the national identity she sees in the making is assimilating all the Sudanese into the Arab-Islamic mold of the North. The area of Morada to which she refers is in Omdurman and was originally the ghetto of ex-slaves from the South, who became

assimilated into the northern Arab-Islamic mold, although they continue to occupy a lower status in the socioeconomic hierarchy of the North.

As pointed out earlier, most northerners, including those who advocate an independent Sudanese identity, seem to believe that Arabism is a cultural and not a racial concept and still provides a creative ground for national integration on the basis of the present northern model. This point was implied by the anthropologist, Abdal-Ghaffar, when he said, "I think the utilization of the cultural symbols for political reasons can be either unifying or divisive. We have so far used them divisively. We could reverse that if we start looking at the situation seriously." In essence, Abd al-Ghaffar recognizes that northern Sudanese believe they are physically or racially Arab, that this is not supported by the facts of their physical makeup, that the basis of their identification with Arabism must therefore be cultural, and that this cultural approach could be used either negatively to divide, which has been the case in the past, or positively to unite, which should be the strategy for the future. For Abd al-Ghaffar, then, to reveal the cultural basis of Arabism is to avoid the racial aspect so that it can be used as a more flexible tool for integration along Arab cultural lines. Although he would include the African element to be more accommodating of the Sudanese realities and therefore more uniting than has been the case in the past, it is obvious that Arabism would provide a more cohesive, unified, and dominant model for nation building. That is why he advocated that southerners and non-Arab northerners who spoke Arabic be accorded the right to identify themselves as Arabs.

Aisha implicitly also advocated the peaceful, eclectic, and assimilationist framework of Arab culture as an alternative to what she saw as the discriminating and rejectionist attitude of Western culture, clearly seeing a better opportunity for the former than the latter in the Sudanese context. "Arab identity or culture is inclusive rather than exclusive. It incorporates other cultures within it. This approach, if you compare it with the Anglo-Saxon cultural approach, demonstrates a contrast. Anglo-Saxon culture repels other cultures. But if we look to Arab and Islamic history we see that many peoples were able to incorporate themselves into Islamic and Arab culture. These people didn't have to completely change their identity. They continued to harbor their own identity and this became part of the larger [Arab] identity."

Aisha's view of Anglo-Saxon rejectionist theory on cultural rather than on racial bases does not seem to reflect the American melting-pot concept, which remains pertinent despite criticisms and modifications, nor does it give due regard to the Anglophonic and Francophonic cul-

tural influence of Europe, to mention only two, throughout the world. But perhaps what Aisha meant was the racial dimension, which, true to the Arab tradition, she fuses with the cultural aspect. And in that respect, she is correct that while the Anglo-Saxon model dichotomizes between White and Black or non-White, the Arab model purports to assimilate and to incorporate, irrespective of the shades of color.

The process of self-perception and dynamic mutual influence on the basis of the Arab model was also reflected in the analysis of the Marxist al-Tigani al-Tayeb. Al-Tayeb makes a point often emphasized by northerners to favor Arab nationalism over Africanism, which is seen as only a geographical reality while Arabism is perceived as a dynamic and integrating concept that also provides for the accommodation of differences. "The inhabitants of the North were mostly non-Arabs, but the migration of the Arabs and their religion and culture eventually predominated. A beautiful mixture occurred in the country. It is true that the Nubian people are proud of their non-Arab roots and heritage, as are tribes like the Hadendowa and the Beja. Nevertheless, we cannot discount the great influence of the Arabs and Arabism in that region. Even the so-called Negroid groups in Sudan found themselves linked to the outside world via the North and many began to communicate among themselves in the Arabic language."

Although most respondents did not make the point as explicitly as Abdal-Ghaffar, Aisha, and al-Tayeb, the manner in which Islam had spread through persuasion and by eclectically embracing preexisting beliefs and practices and the role of Arabic as a common language are seen as potential instruments of integration.⁶ The use of Arabic is viewed as a noncontroversial issue, especially as indigenous Sudanese languages are considered noncompetitive. Northerners consider English foreign, so it does not enjoy the same degree of legitimacy as Arabic, which they have come to regard as indigenous. As Abd al-Rahman al-Bashir put it, "The Arab language I think is the language of the country, whether one is in Southern Sudan or in Northern Sudan. It has been accepted. I don't think anybody is objecting to Arabic as a language. All this is taking place in a very natural way. If we just take things with tolerance there would be

no problem at all. Arabic has been prevailing in the South in a very natural way.”

Taha al-Noumahn, a journalist, quotes John Garang, the leader of the SPLM-SPLA, as having endorsed Arabic as the national language of the Sudan. Mansour Khalid also reports that Garang said in his address to the Koka Dam meeting in March 1986 that Arab culture “is

our culture and Arabic is our language, and they are there to stay.”⁷ Paraphrasing Garang, Khalid added, “It is the racially biased hegemony that is to go.”⁸ In his address to the Koka Dam conference, Garang spoke on the issue of languages: “We are a product of historical development. Arabic (though I am poor in it — I should learn it fast) must be the national language in a new Sudan and therefore we must learn it. Arabic cannot be said to be the language of the Arabs. English is the language of Americans, but that country is America, not England. Spanish is the language of Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba and they are those countries, not Spain. Therefore I take Arabic on scientific grounds as the language of the Sudan!”⁹

There are southerners, even among members of the SPLM-SPLA, who were educated in the Arabic system both at home and abroad, for whom Arabic is virtually the first language, but there are also many southerners, perhaps the majority, who see Arabic as part of the dominant and dominating culture they resist with a counter-nationalism for which English becomes a modern tool, even though it is available only to a small, highly educated elite. Al-Bashir is correct that the inhibitions against Arabic as a language independent of political associations have diminished over the years, and increasing numbers of southerners speak Arabic with fluency. But northern optimism about the political dimension of cultural integration along Arab-Islamic lines fails to realize that the conflict between the North and the South has been in large measure due to southern resistance to imposed and dominating assimilation through Arabization and Islamization. Nevertheless, al-Bashir may also be correct that it is the imposition and domination more than the principle of assimilation that the South has been resisting and that both Arabization and Islamization might progress more smoothly in an environment of equitable participation and peaceful interaction. In any case, knowing Arabic does not imply a commitment to Arabism as the basis for forging the national identity.

Indeed, while some southerners may resist learning or using Arabic as a political statement — such as the Dinka chief and spiritual leader Makuei Bilkuei, who alleged that God had prohibited him from learning Arabic

because doing so would turn him into a bad man — being proficient in Arabic only permits a southerner to articulate his case to northerners more effectively. After all, the leaders of the anticolonial movement were mostly people who were cosmopolitan and conversant with the cultures of the colonial powers.

The account of Moses Akol provides insight into the process of Arab-

ization that still takes place in urban centers of the South. It is fostered by a variety of inducements and incentives that approximate the original process, though in the context of North-South conflict, Akol views it as repugnant to the principles of pluralism and mutual respect. "Being from Malakal I know for a fact that there are some people who are ethnically Shilluk, or Dinka or whatever, but because they live in the towns and have picked up some Arabic culture, and because the Arabs have always been in better economic conditions, they would like to associate themselves with the Arabs and even claim that they are Arabs. Although they do not speak good Arabic, they pick up Islamic names and feel that they are Arabs. Because they present themselves as Arabs, they are treated better by the institutions which are run by Arabs or Northern Sudanese."

Moses Akol initially expressed skepticism that identity was a real problem, but he substantiated it, emphasizing its externalized manipulation by the ruling elite of the North for political and economic gains from Arab countries. "I am always inclined to say, 'What problem?' Identity becomes a problem only when people use it to gain power and economic wealth. The problem between South and North has always been that the North has the government institutions and the economic machinery of the country. They can go to Saudi Arabia and say the war in Southern Sudan is between Arabs and Africans, and we the Arabs are being annihilated. The next day, they go to Kuwait and say the same thing. They go to Iran and say that this war is really between the Muslims and the pagans in Africa." Moses Akol also dismissed identity as a factor for the average person, but then expounded on it in political terms as a form of racism: "A very small group of people with certain skin complexion has always claimed that their identity is superior. Even if somebody is in the North and is culturally a Northerner, just because his or her skin color is different, people will say that he or she is a slave. I think that is where the problem lies. If we accept that Sudanese generally are dark-complexion people, it should really be irrelevant whether persons who live in Omdurman are of slave ancestry or not. Because of the black color of their skin, they should be the ones actually claiming that the country is theirs!

Moses Akol compared northern response to the southerners of slave origin, who led the first nationalist movement against British rule in the early 1920s and were widely accepted as heroes in the North, and to the current leadership of the SPLM-SPLA, whose declared objective is the unity of the Sudan but are not equally accepted in the North. He

concluded that the difference lies in religious bigotry and racism. The leaders of the nationalist movement were Arabized Muslims, while the leaders of the current movement are largely non-Muslim and non-Arab. "I think that paradigm is still there. People say: 'These people are from the South, their identity is African, and we are from the North, our identity is Arab.'" To be more precise, and fair to the North, Ali Abd al-Latif and his colleagues led a movement against colonial rule, while John Garang and his southern colleagues are leading an internal revolution. But in support of Moses Akol's main argument, even the southern leaders of that early nationalist movement also suffered rejection on racial grounds, for although they were initially popular, once their movement collapsed, prominent voices were raised against them, the theme being one of astonishment that descendants of slaves should have contemplated becoming leaders of the country. The rhetorical question was what had become of the country that such people should dream of becoming national leaders.¹⁰

It is, however, becoming increasingly recognized among the more educated centrist liberal elements in the North that the country needs more uniting symbols or models of identity around which a sense of commonality and collective purpose can be fostered. Except for the Muslim revivalists or certain circles in the sectarian community, most educated Sudanese postulate the concept of a new Sudan in which the divisive labels of race, ethnicity, tribe, or religion would not be allowed to play a role in public life. In the words of Stephen Madut Baak, "The SPLM-SPLA is actually trying to forge a commonality for all Sudanese. That is Sudanism. First of all we are all Sudanese, no matter what race we belong to. That should be our ideology. Our common identity is first of all Sudanese in the African continent with some Arab elements."

As Moses Akol has intimated, however the leadership and the movement both suffer from their close association with the southern identity, exacerbated by the use of force. Even among the liberal elements in the North, the typical questions still being asked are, "What does John [Garang] really want?" as though he could not be serious about liberating the whole country, and "Whom does he expect to rule?" again implying

that a southerner cannot become the head of the nation.¹¹ And so the principle of a new Sudan is widely accepted, while the leading proponents of the idea are rejected because of the incongruity of their identity.

The SPLM-SPLA has succeeded in raising awareness of the crisis

among northerners to intensify the quest for a uniting concept of identity. Aisha speaks of the need to explore new concepts of Sudanese identity that would be more nationally based, as an imperative with which the Sudanese elite must reckon. "I don't think Sudanese intellectuals have a choice any more. We cannot today say there is no real problem between the North and the South or continue to argue that these problems are a result of the British colonial period. People should look to the true historical and social realities of our country. We must look at this with the perspective that we are composed of many different tribes and that no one dominant tribe or race can impose itself upon the others. We must accept the reality of our diversity."

But even in this liberal attitude, there is an element of loyalty to the status quo in that much of what is called for is a better appreciation for what in fact exists, with the Arab-Islamic element as the dominant factor. According to Aisha, however, what is involved should not be a question of giving up the old symbols of identity and being made to accept new ones. She argues that a Sudanese identity has already developed, despite tribal pluralism, and continues to evolve. What is therefore needed is to understand the character of this identity and to foster its evolution. "The question of whether the Sudanese identity can be this or that should not be forced. Our reality is very flexible. Kamal Ataturk tried to alter Turkey into a European nation, eliminating its roots of having been an Islamic Kingdom or Sultanate. The society in Turkey is still suffering because of that. I think this abrupt, forcible change of character is insane and I wouldn't choose to see the Sudan change at the point of a gun into an Islamic, or an Arab, or an African, or whatever identity. I think the social struggle itself is safer and leads to the best, natural result." Although she does not explicitly mention the SPLM-SPLA, it is evident that its revolutionary method is the object of her criticism.

The goal of the quest for identity is often seen in a model comparable to that of the United States. According to Sidgi Kaballo, "In the United States there is almost every national representation, but they do not stress that; they focus on being American. We should think about being Sudanese. We have interests that bring us together with Africans, with

Arabs, and sometimes with some people in the international community who are neither Arabs nor Africans.” Malwal Leek sees the model of the United States in the mixing that is already taking place in the Sudan. “It is only the sense of conflict which is pushing the divisive

characteristics. The Sudan is [many things] combined. It is Arab, it is Islamic, it is African, it is Western, and it is Eastern.”

Advocating the liberal integrationist conception, Malwal Leek postulates a philosophy of tolerance that would enable the various groups to live and let live. “The question is how to get the State and the economic powers off the back of the weaker cultural groups, and allow these ... groups to express their own identities. In my stay in California, I was very much impressed by the fact that when there was an African liberation day the number of whites who came were always more than the number of African Americans and Africans. The same happened when the Poles were celebrating their national cultural day; everybody went. This is the kind of situation I would like to see in Sudan.”

In another context, Malwal Leek elaborated on the theme of ethnic, cultural, and political pluralism with equality: “The only way out for Sudan, the Sudanese, and whoever is in power, is for all of us to sit and dialogue on all the issues until we agree. I am calling for a seriously negotiated settlement [which] will bring us to an arrangement where we can have institutions that can continue to solve problems as we had done in our traditional, communal life ... an institutional system that can continue to generate and develop whole cultures. Let all the flowers bloom.”

Meanwhile, Malwal Leek sees the armed conflict in the South as the inevitable outcome of the injustice imposed by the system; he feels that the war itself will force a solution on those in power. “If not enough is done to accept a negotiated settlement [war will not end]. Garang has had legitimate complaints: ‘We have no economic presence, no military presence, our culture is not accepted, this system does not want us.’ What has been offered to resolve these grievances? It is incumbent upon the ruling interests to show Garang and his people what they have to offer them. The solution to this conflict will have to come from Khartoum.”

Those who recognize that there is a crisis of identity in the Sudan seem to share Malwal Leek’s perspective and see its solution in the creation of a national identity that would encompass all the existing diversities within

the collective framework of the Sudan as an identity concept. What this means precisely and how it can be achieved remain elusive. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the present state of affairs is the result of fusion between the traditional symbols of tribal

identities and the broadening concepts of Islam and Arabism in the North and Christian Western education in the South, with an identity vision that extends into Africanism. The efforts of the SPLM-SPLA to define the postulated new Sudan in secular and more nationally oriented terms suffer from its southern association and its implicit contradiction with Islamic theocracy and the esteemed Pan-Arab identity. These factors at least in part account for the skepticism over the crisis of national identity.

SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE CRISIS

Many Sudanese, northerners and southerners alike, as is apparent in some of the accounts quoted above, dispute the thesis of a crisis of identity in the country. This skepticism relates to both the diagnosis and the cure. The reasons for this are varied and have to do with what is meant or understood by an identity crisis and what curative measures are envisaged.

Much of the argument against the existence of a crisis stems from the assumption that what is implied is that individuals and groups do not know what they are or are not at ease with their self-perceptions. In a way, there is an aspect of that in the diagnosis of the crisis, for what people subjectively consider themselves to be does not necessarily correlate with the objective elements of their racial, ethnic, and cultural composition. While most are at ease with themselves, despite this internal contradiction, many are beginning to question their own self-perceptions. But this would be a matter of less public interest if the definition of national identity itself were not in dispute on racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious grounds. Even the skeptics, who begin by denying the crisis, end up substantiating it, a profound contradiction which in itself demonstrates the magnitude of the problem and the urgency of the need for continued debate on the complex issues involved. To say that individuals and even groups are at peace with their self-perceptions does not mean that the nation, torn apart by conflicting symbols of identity, is not in a crisis.

Perceiving the problem in terms of individuals' or even groups' satisfaction with their self-perceptions and contrasting that with the

conflict in which the national identity framework is violently contested
generates ambiguities in the analytical orientation of many Sudanese

from both the North and the South. For instance, the historian Sidgi Kaballo, after calling the notion of an identity crisis an “illusion” — not only because local people know what they are, but also because they have extended their sense of identity to the nation and now consider themselves “Sudanese” — substantiates the national dimension of the problem by focusing on the fact that government policies are at variance with the citizens' sense of the national identity:

I think saying that the crisis is a crisis of identity is an illusion among the intellectuals. If you just went and asked anyone on the streets in Khartoum, he will tell you that he is Sudanese, while fifty years ago he might tell you he is a Shaigi, or a Ja'alli, on the tribal levels. The national movement after the [world] war was trying to promote the image of a Sudanese identity. They tried to promote this image of Sudanese without looking to religion, saying, “The nation for all and religion for God.” Now things are becoming different with the existence of the Sudan in this area being African geographically and related to the Middle East politically. This makes not a problem of identity, but how to balance policies. It is rather a problem of foreign policy and external relations than a problem of identity of the citizen inside. The citizen knows that he is Sudanese. He is neither an Arab nor an African; he is Sudanese. That is the identity. Through this dynamic of the development of the Sudanese identity I think there are features which come together in being citizens of the country.

In another context, Kaballo went even further in acknowledging that incongruent government policies have indeed generated a national problem of identity: “One of the reasons for the current Arabization of the North might be the rise of Arab nationalism during the Nasserist regime since 1956 (after the Suez War). Before this, there were no Arab nationalist movements in Sudan! In his opinion, “The transformation of the problem in Sudan into Arab vs. African, Muslim vs. Christian is a new thing and has nothing to do with the realities of the situation. This is why I said it is an illusion. Sometimes ideologies which are illusions can be very strong forces — that is a real problem.”

Ambrose Riny Thiik, former appellate court judge, also refuted the

existence of an identity crisis on the grounds that people know what they are, but then he argued that the war in the South is indeed a conflict of identities. First, he stated quite unequivocally: "I don't buy

this idea that there is a problem of identity in Sudan; we each know where we stand. Those who call themselves Arabs believe intensely that they are Arabs, and that the Sudan is an Arab-Islamic country. We have no doubt in the South and in other parts of the Sudan that we are not Arabs, and we do not believe that religion should be the basis for running the country. So we don't accept that some people in the Sudan should impose their own agenda on us. What we will not accept in this day and age are some people who oppress you and prevent you from developing in the name of their own cultural and racial identity." His next passage indicates that the issue for him is not really the lack of an identity crisis, but rather that there are clearly distinct, competing and conflicting identities. He would therefore prefer to call it a crisis of unity rather than a crisis of national identity:

The ruling Arabs in Sudan think that it is important that they be of Arab nationality because it is a "superior" race, and they are not prepared to share the country with the [non-Arab] people of Sudan regardless of race and religion. They want to use the racial and religious question in order to maintain dominance, in order to marginalize people they identify as not part of what they are. Now, we know that any country can be shared by various nationalities across race. The United States is a great nation with a multiplicity of races, cultures, and religions. It has moved forward, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunity to develop and advance, and to aspire for a higher position in their state. This is not obviously the thinking of our compatriots in Northern Sudan.

Riny recognized that not all northerners share that attitude; some believe in pluralism and equality. But according to him, they are an ineffective minority: "Unfortunately we wish their numbers were a little more than we are able to see. If they were able to become the majority, there would be the possibility for the people to develop a commonality in that position and establish a country But in view of the fact that these are an extreme minority while the majority insist on maintaining power on the grounds of race and religion, that to me is the crux of the Sudanese crisis."

As we saw earlier, Moses Akol, who had also argued against the

existence of an identity crisis, pointed out discriminatory practices that aim at promoting Arabization and Islamization in the South, a process which he argues continues to be supported by material inducements

and which he sees as an aspect of Arab-Islamic domination: “Basically, if somebody identifies as Arab it means economically; he will be looked on with some favor [and] be in a better position than the indigenous Southern Sudanese. If Southerners identify politically with the Northern institutions, then they will also be elevated. The wrong person is put in high office simply because he identifies with Arab/Northern culture. I think that is oppression because that person will be working against his people.”

Bona Malwal prefers to describe the crisis as a political struggle for power rather than an identity crisis. In other words, he sees Arabism and Islam as tools of domination, which should be recognized and fought politically rather than questioned as unsubstantiated symbols of identity. When Mansour Khalid, who was interviewed with Bona Malwal, interjected that he saw no contradiction between the two viewpoints since “political domination in view of these differences is the one that creates the crisis,” Bona Malwal agreed. But to him, as to many southerners and northerners, addressing the crisis as primarily one of identity would require too long a process of correction, which the nation can ill afford.

What seems to emerge in the resistance against the words identity and crisis is that people misunderstand the purpose of the analysis to be a mere delineation of identities to be subjectively recognized by those concerned and objectively accommodated by the system. The crisis envisioned goes beyond the mere fact of the existence of identities. It should go on to include the assessment of their equitable involvement in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country; which would require a redefinition of the national constitutional and legal framework. This broadened concept, however, seems to evade the respondents.

Nevertheless, hardly any of those questioned made a clear case against the diagnosis of a national crisis of identity. They all recognized the preoccupation of the Sudanese with their diverse traditional identities and their extension into the transitional and modern phases of nation building. Their denial of the existence of a crisis stems in part from their assertion

that people know what they are and therefore suffer no crisis of personal identification. That self-satisfaction with the subjective perceptions of identity is increasingly questioned by the overwhelming majority of the more enlightened liberal northern Sudanese, but admittedly less so by the Arabists and the Islamists. How-

ever, the real roots of the national crisis rest in the discriminatory promotion of Arabism and Islam as the criteria that determine participation in public life. Some northerners maintain that a sense of Sudanese identity that is racially and religiously neutral and pluralistic has been in the making since the nationalist movement for independence. They concede, however, that in recent times it has been eroded by the policies of the sectarian parties and their Islamic trend, now reinforced and consolidated by the National Islamic Front. It can therefore be said that whether or not one agrees with the currently dominant Islamic trend, the fact that it is being challenged by a formidable force from the South, the SPLM-SPLA, which is contesting the character of the nation, means that the country is clearly suffering from a devastating crisis of national identity.

At this point, the story of the life and death of Daoud Bolad may help elucidate the depth and complexity of the Sudan's struggle with the question of identity. While this is the story of a single individual, it demonstrates that on the subjective level at least, identity matters and can have far-ranging consequences. It also shows how the model that the North held out to this man, a black non-Arab from Darfur, was embraced and then rejected in a life-and-death struggle in the search for identity and affiliation. Daoud Bolad was born in 1951 or 1952. He was of Fur tribal origin and spoke an indigenous Fur language as he grew up in Southern Darfur. Sharif Harir, his friend and biographer, reports, "Bolad was also born into a politico-religious sect: the Mahdist Ansar sect of which the Umma party was the political expression. In fact, as Warburg recently observed, 'In the reality of the Sudan, one was born into a sect just as one was born into a family or a tribe, and one's own political convictions, though important in themselves, were of little significance when it came to realpolitik. With a Muslim leadership convinced of its Islamic civilizing mission, it is not surprising that the Sudan has failed to produce a formula defining its own identity that satisfies all its ethnic, religious and cultural components.'"¹² Bolad learned Arabic in the national educational system by memorizing the Koran. Other courses at the primary and intermediate levels included the study of the modern Sudan, European history, and the biological sciences. These courses

were not based on the local system or experience, and they exposed Bolad and his classmates to an inevitable conflict — the disparity between the tribal custom, tradition, and culture that they knew and the larger worldview brought to

them through education. Sharif Harir continues, "In the few cases that [their education] reflected ... Sudanese life, it was a ... life beyond the bounds of the Fur or Dar Fur local reality, *i.e.* riverain culture and practice was portrayed as a higher level of culture, and the local customs were portrayed as embarrassingly primitive and outdated. This tendency was progressively reinforced as one went from one rung on the educational ladder to the next."¹³ By the time students had finished their secondary education, they were almost completely alienated from their local cultures. This system "tended to push them towards standard Sudanization which is synonymous with the values of the urban riverain cultures of Northern Sudan."¹⁴ Perhaps as part of this general rejection of his local tradition or perhaps in protest against the Umma party's blatant exploitation and manipulation of Darfurians, Bolad sought an alternative political platform. The Sudanese Communist party did not appeal to his religious background, and as a non-Arab, the Arab Ba'athist party was not open to him. "The logical and practical alternative," writes Harir, "was the Muslim Brotherhood," which in 1964 became a full-fledged political party — the Islamic Charter Front. It was led by a young lawyer and former academic from the University of Khartoum, Dr. Hassan Abdalla al-Turabi.

Bolad continued his education at the University of Khartoum, where he studied engineering from 1971 to 1978. While there he worked himself into the position of chairman of the Khartoum University Students' Union (KUSU). This organization was not merely a students' academic and social interest group. Because political pressure and arrests had severely reduced the active leadership of the Islamic movement during the early days of Nimeiri's regime, political organizing and opposition was carried out by the movement's student members working through various student unions. The most prestigious and active of these was chaired by Bolad at the University of Khartoum. Harir writes,

KUSU, *de facto*, was the executive body of the Islamic movement above the ground. On a more general level, it coordinated, activated and led the widely spread national opposition against Nimeiri's regime. Hence, the chairman of Khartoum University Students' Union mediated between the

interned leadership of the Islamic movement and the Brotherhood on the one hand and the leadership of the national opposition abroad and its cells on the other — but more importantly carried out street actions such

as rioting, demonstrations and general protest activities between 1971 and 1978 when the national reconciliation between Nimeiri and the Sudanese National opposition was effected. On another level, the chairman of KUSU worked closely with Turabi [and others who became prominent members of the Bashir regime.] ... But above all, through his leadership of student protest and destabilization activities and his leadership and articulation of general opposition against Nimeire's regime, Bolad raised himself to the place of the opposite number to Nimeiri, ... the incumbent president of the republic.¹⁵

While in this lofty position, Bolad gained a legendary status punctuated by miraculous escapes from official custody. However, when he graduated from the university in 1978, he abruptly left the limelight. He quietly returned to his home in Southern Darfur and opened a carpentry shop. Whatever his motives, he continued to work for the Islamic movement, building and organizing the National Islamic Front. "But," writes Harir, "during 1987/1989 Bolad was to come out from this 'splendid isolation,' not so much to further the cause of political Islam as to fight a war of survival for his tribe, the Fur, who were then under the threat of annihilation by an alliance of 27 Arab tribes with the tacit complicity of the central government of which his party *i.e.* the National Islamic Front (NIF), was a coalition partner."¹⁶

In 1989 his colleagues in the Islamic movement launched a successful coup, which in Harir's words "secured them exclusive monopoly of political power in the Sudan."¹⁷ Instead of rejoicing at the event and participating in the government, Daoud Bolad left the country. He resurfaced in 1991 as a commander in the SPLA. In a pitched battle led by one of his former associates, Al-Tayeb, the military ruler of Darfur, Bolad's forces were defeated and he was taken captive. He appeared on national television "battered and exhausted but composed." The nation was told that he would be tried for treason, but it seems that his captors reconsidered, for within the week he was dead — a victim of torture. Harir's sources indicate that Bolad's death was deliberate, for "he was too embarrassing a phenomenon to live and defend himself in a court of law... ." ¹⁸

Just when Daoud Bolad began to have doubts about his affiliations and the cause and culture he had embraced so enthusiastically is not known. Nor have the depths of his inner struggles with these issues

been revealed in Harir's academic paper. However, by looking at the objective, outward facts of Bolad's biography, it is clear that he rejected and accepted several identities throughout his lifetime. His original ethnic identity was superseded by that of the dominant urban Islamists. Within its framework he was able to rise and thrive in the political structure. His return to his home region, however, signals that he was not altogether satisfied and fully realized within the northern mold. Bolad's final embrace of the southern resistance movement indicates a clear rejection of the Islamic agenda and an affirmation of a more encompassing identity. His boyhood friend, Sharif Harir, believes that "had he survived the brutality of his captors, he would never have shed his basic social self: a Sudanese Muslim from the Fur of Dar Fur."¹⁹ This identity, then, would be a mix of national, religious, tribal, and regional elements. Whatever the potential of Bolad's identity dynamics and their relevance to the country, Harir's central point is that behind the Islamic ideology of the Sudan lies a racist system, which continues to divide even the Muslims into Arabs and non-Arabs in that order of value.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CRISIS

The overwhelming majority of those interviewed placed the blame for the widening religious cleavage, with its racial and cultural concomitants, on the sectarian political parties and on the Muslim fundamentalists or revivalists as represented by the National Islamic Front.

On the role of sectarian parties, Sidgi Kaballo observed that the objective of creating a new Sudan is hampered by the northern parties.

The Umma and the DUP, both derived from religious based groups are unwilling to go against the trend. It is the thorn in the flesh of all our politics in the Sudan. When Sadiq was overthrown in 1989, it was due to the narrowness of his regime, which allowed the NIF to topple him. This regime is now determined to Islamicize Sudan. All aspects of Sudanese identity based on the pluralism of the country with respect to race and religion are ignored. The problem is that even if this regime is overthrown and the two traditional parties come back to power, we will still find ourselves in the same vicious circle. As far as I am concerned, the three

Northern parties, the NIF, the Khatmiyya [DUP], and the Ansar [Umma] have no basis for the national unity of the country.

Ali al-Haj Muhammad, the government spokesman and negotiator, understandably has a different point of view and distinguishes the NIF from the other two religiously based parties, the Umma and the DUP.

These parties are actually based either on history, or family or both. [They] are things of heritage and they have built on that because [for them] it all goes back to their grandfathers. So what is next? There is no next [if] it all depends on the heritage. I am not saying that heritage is a bad thing. It is something natural, but when it comes to religion, there is no heritage, and this can be quoted in Islam. We have got an approach to Islam which goes beyond the heritage and tries to see the whole thing of Islam. We are going to the source of Islam. This is very important. Because most of the Islamists active in Sudan do not depend on heritage. It is all your own make, or what you acquire, or what you do rather than your father. And that results in two things. The Islam that you are talking about, call it intellectual, [we try] to implement it, while those people (Umma, DUP) look at Islam as a heritage coming from their ancestors, and they have to take it like that. And so they don't give way for others to take their place. I might say that sometimes they might use it as a tactic rather than the reality. I am not saying we don't have tactics, but we are not going to play with something important. We are not in any way going to give wrong signals to the people. And I think that is a very big difference. Now, it might be an advantage, it might be a disadvantage. We think that this is an advantage so that people can come to something which will be realistic, which will be acceptable, and which will be honored.

Muhammad al-Fateh of the Umma party attributes the NIF's political ascendancy to the use of financial resources acquired from the Arab-Islamic world, the manipulation of the banking system at home, and the infiltration of the army: "Under Nimeiri the NIF created and built up huge financial institutions with the aid of the government and began to promote their fundamentalist message. Prior to the overthrow of Nimeiri the NIF

gambled on putting their people in influential positions within the military.
Even after the military was forced to side

with the people, the NIF continued to gamble on the military, since they knew that democracy would not work in their favor. In the end, their program could only be implemented by [their faction within] the military.”

Most of those interviewed were opposed to the Islamic agenda being pursued by the present regime in collaboration with the National Islamic Front, both in principle and because of the non-Muslim South. Yet the real motivation must be ascribed to the struggle for power within the North. To be fair, while the sectarian parties cannot dispute the Islamic agenda of the NIF or the present military regime, there are northerners who believe in the separation of religion and state. Abdalla al-Tayeb, the renowned Islamic scholar, argued that theocracy and the modern concept of nationhood are incompatible: “The linkage between religion and nationhood is wrong, because nationhood is a modern concept and religion is an eternal concept. Religion shouldn't be confused with modern, secular day-to-day matters connected to power struggle. If we are to be referred back to the early days of Islam, then the question was religious, not national at all. And with regard to our own country, my own view is that the best thing for the Sudanese is to lie low. We are in a middle position. We can benefit a great deal by being in this middle position. And from a purely religious point of view the decree passed by Othman in the year 31 A. H., I think is binding.”

Caliph Othman is supposed to have declared the Sudan Dar al-Soluh, Land of Reconciliation, as opposed to the conventional Dar el Harb, Land of War against Islam. This means that Muslims were not supposed to be in a state of war with the non-Muslims of Sudan. Quite apart from this classic ruling, separating religion from the affairs of the state is not perceived as a violation of Islam for, as Muhammad Omar Bashir put it, “We have to distinguish between two schools of Islam or of thought in Sudan. There is the Islam that we all know. We were all born Muslims with some of us practicing it and others not. There is also the Islam of a few. Dr. Garang calls it an intellectual form of Islam, used by a group to politicize Islam and impose its vision on the country. I admit that it is very problematic to distinguish between these two forms of Islam. How can we isolate the Islam of the few from the general trend of Islam in the

Sudan?”

Sidgi Kaballo elaborated on the peculiar version of Islam that has evolved in the Sudan and which he believes is in tune with the prin-

ciples of secularism, pluralism, and democracy: "The first condition for a 'new Sudan' must be that it be secular because there is no one Sudanese character. Without being secular, which means also being democratic, you will not allow for multiplicity. Pluralism does in fact have a strong tradition in Sudan. The Sudanese Sufist Islam treats a person who drinks only as an 'assi (a person who does not obey God's will but still believes in God), the idea being that God will bring him back on the right and true path. This sort of mild treatment we call *altasamu'h*, or forgiveness."

Abbas Abdal-Karim Ahmed elaborated the point, taking the advent of Turkish rule as the beginning of the development of a central Nile Valley culture. "Sudanese have got their own perception and practice of Islam. And among themselves they have differences. People in the western Sudan are Muslims, but they practice probably something different. Muslims would not hesitate to drink after *salat al-isha*, evening prayers. This, you will never find in any Islamic country. They in fact even see that as quite a funny phenomenon — people who say their prayers five times a day who would still, in socializing, drink! We have got our own Islamic identity." Abbas sees the people now confronted with two choices: one, to follow a pattern of mixing and integrating, which is being facilitated by the influx of southerners to the North; and the other, the religiously discriminatory and separatist line introduced by the military regime's implementation of the Islamic agenda in alliance with the NIF.

Abd al-Ghaffar sees the NIF as a narrow-based movement, despite its seeming power, and believes that time is not on its side. "The divisive element now is that you have a group of people, and I have to say a minority group coming to power and trying to force the Arab Islamic, cultural element and use it politically to dominate the rest. However, they are, I think, quite sure that they are not in any way able to represent the country as such. I don't think that is going to hold for a long time, but definitely it is going to prolong our miseries in the war zone areas." Building on personal insight into the thinking of individuals in the regime, he concludes that their vision is not farsighted. "I had the opportunity to work with one of the very prominent leaders who engineered that coup, a

university person. He said, 'This is the only opportunity we have got; we would like to get our share in ruling the country.' That is the kind of vision which this group of people has. I don't think it is going to last for long."

Abdal-Ghaffar's assessment might have been excessively influenced by the few he scrutinized, for there can be little doubt that NIF has a clear, long-range vision that transcends not only sectarian boundaries, but the borders of the nation-state. Perhaps the difference is between the broad-based following and the strategic planners at the summit, of which Hassan al-Turabi is undoubtedly the leader. His views on the mission of Islam in the Sudan and in the African and Middle Eastern contexts are only partially documented but are both contextually specific and conceptually universal.²⁰

However, the political crisis in the North is more a struggle for power — who gets in and out — than it is a difference of opinion on the major issues pertaining to the role of Islam in the state and society. The only significant difference is between the now-outmoded secularist left and the various versions of the Islamists. Al-Tigani al-Tayeb, a well-known Marxist, condemns the NIF as “unproductive” and “parasitic,” by which he means “not only that it does not have factories or agricultural projects, but also it lives on or off the big and immediate deals, the big opportunities. They are like locusts. They gain profits without themselves contributing anything productive or lasting for the country.”

A number of respondents expressed the view that the policies and operations of the NIF may well provide the basis for its downfall. Building on the thesis that the movement is narrowly based and unrepresentative even of the North, they argue that the fundamentalists are inducing anti-fundamentalist sentiments among the Muslim population: “If you had asked [before the coup] you might have gotten a lot of people enthusiastic that Sudan should follow the Arab-Islamic path. I think everybody has discovered that this is a utilization of divisive cultural elements by a very small group of people who are not interested in getting the country to function properly.” Abdal-Ghaffar goes on to say: “If someone now calls for the abolition of Islamic law no one will demonstrate on the street. This is because they are fed up with the NIF and their oppression. People don't like dictatorships and they hate everything related to dictatorship. The communists suffered because their name was linked to that dictatorship in 1969–71.”

Abdal-Ghaffar, however, sees Sudan's poverty and dependence on Arab-Islamic financial support as an obstacle to a Sudanese solution that would restore moderation and state neutrality on religious matters. "If we could avoid that, if we could even establish good relations

with the United States independent of the Gulf, that will make us more independent to make our own decisions... . We won't abolish our Islamic and Arab heritage, but we will have to limit it to its correct size within the context of Sudanese society."

Magdi Ahmed Amin believes that Islam is not equipped to deal with the problems of the modern world, and its failure to do so will inevitably lead to the resolution of the present religious identity problems of the country.

It would be noble to say that we are going to drop the idea of Islam in government, but it will not dissolve itself through reason; it is going to dissolve itself through failure. Once it fails, not only due to the fact that it will not stop the war, but also because it won't do anything about the economy that force will be expended and the movement itself will be humbled in the face of the massive problems of the country. People will then realize that Islam is completely unequipped as an ideology and as a political expression to deal with their problems. And once [it] is gone, people are going to be able to look at life more realistically and the forces of reconciliation and mediation will be stronger.

Magdi sees the responsibility shared by the SPLM-SPLA to a degree, even though the NIF must shoulder the larger responsibility. He believes that the level of suffering in the South should dictate compromises to the SPLM-SPLA. "I don't think that Garang has taken up all the chances that he could have taken up. You know that he is morally right to take his stand, but you sometimes wish that some of the opportunities for peace were not passed up in the past." And yet, Magdi recognizes that as long as the problem is one of a national identity crisis, no reasonable solution can be available to Garang in these so-called opportunities. "Of course the South will never get its true share of the national identity as long as the North has not figured itself out. It will really take a philosophical revolution for them to resolve the question of identity and then come to a conclusion with an identity that also includes the South. It would take two revolutions almost for that to happen." Presumably for that reason, he considers it more practical for the South to settle for less than the resolution of the identity crisis. "What has to happen is that people have

to say that this question of identity is not that important. What is important is our survival on a human level, the cost of this war and the cost of human suffering we

are inflicting on people and therefore inflicting on ourselves; the cost, not just economic but also psychological, of constantly being unable to do anything but cause death and destruction for others and for ourselves. This is realism.”

To Magdi, the very notion of identity in the realm of public affairs means commitment to exclusive labels that militate against nationhood. He therefore recommends disregarding identity in favor of the concept of the nation-state, although what he seems to be doing is formulating a framework for the management of identity problems. “We basically need to form a state and a nation on something that respects all identities, but not focusing on the issue of identity itself. Once you focus on the issue of identity, trying to make ethnicity and identity pay in a political sense puts you in the Lebanon paradigm. That is, identity is the focus upon which the whole state structure is built. I think what needs to happen is that we should say, ‘Well, you guys can entertain yourselves with whatever identity you want, Arab, Muslim, or whatever! Identity will have to step aside while we first solve our urgent problems.’” What will or should step aside are the divisive identities being postulated as national; a new national identity would either be all embracing or would regulate equitable coexistence and interaction among the diverse identities. This is very different from disregarding the issue of identity.

Malwal Leek shares the view that time is against the extremism of the Islamic fundamentalists and in favor of tolerance and mutual accommodation:

My own feeling is that I am no longer bothered about whether Dinka culture will survive or not, whether the African presence will survive or not, whether the Christian aspect of me will survive or not. In actual fact, it has been affirmed ever since 1947, when the Southerners generated an idea which cannot stop now. I am also not bothered that the end of the person who is presently struggling to improve the lot of the South could mean the end of the idea. I think these things have been put on record. The idea will pass on to the next generation.

So the question is now soon do we come to some kind of an arrangement which will enable us to coexist peacefully On this I am reminded of a statement made by Samoro Machel when the leader of their movement in Mozambique was killed and they suf-

ferred a setback in their march toward independence. He said, "These are kicks of a dying buffalo." I am inclined to believe that intellectual, political, and economic hegemony is actually dying.

If we end this question of imposing things and allow the population to have its say and move to a democratic, pluralistic political arrangement and for that matter a move towards multiple identities, it would be possible for the Sudan to get out of this present nightmare. Each of us has insisted to pursue his or her identity but they also continue to coexist. The question is to translate this into a constitutional arrangement in the first place, and then to rearrange the political, economic, and judicial institutions — to redesign them in such a way that it fits the plural character of the Sudan. I think that this will be realized soon.

As Sidgi Kaballo observed, equality, especially before the law, should be the guiding principle of such a formula: "Really, people need to be equal in getting jobs, in standing for competition, in attending schools and so on. You have to bring about developmental incentives in the marginalized areas. In addition, we have to work towards an integrated economic base for all of Sudan. If Northerners become dependent on oil from the South, and the South becomes dependent on the textiles in the Central Sudan, and the West provides edible oils from groundnuts, we will break economic barriers which in itself is a prerequisite for national unity."

What this means in relation to the issue of identity is that the government should not regard shaping a national identity along any ideological, ethnic, or religious lines as a priority, but instead should first address the critical problems of the country and leave identity as a personal or private matter. This is not to say that there is no problem of identity, but rather that identity should not be allowed to be a problem, which occurs when one identity is imposed on others. A positive alternative would be a national identity with which all citizens identify or one that at least accommodates other identities equitably. This position is essentially not different from the idea that calls for a new order in which there would be no discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity religion, or the like. What is postulated therefore is that it is on these broad principles that a

national philosophy, ideology, or framework can be developed that would constitute an embracing national identity with equality as the centerpiece.

THE ARAB-ISLAMIC TREND

Despite these overwhelmingly liberal views, none of the successive governments since Nimeiri has been able to abolish shari'a, and the consistent argument has been that no Muslim leader can do so with impunity. Also significant is the fact that no credible political force is in sight that promises to alter this pattern. Furthermore, given the close interconnection between Islam and Arabism in the modern Sudanese nationalist movement, the issues involved are far more complex than what the respondents say. This is why the dissenting opinion among those interviewed has a special significance. They say what may be the bitter truth that most wishful thinkers may not want to accept, far less express.

Perhaps the most articulate voice among those interviewed who spoke in defense of the Sudan's Arabism was the literary scholar Khalid al-Mubarak. For that reason, he is quoted at some length. First, he stresses the composite nature of northern Sudanese identity, which he claims is accepted at face value. "Personally I don't see any identity crisis as a northern Sudanese. I see myself as somebody within the Arab-Islamic culture. I am at peace with that. I do not deny the fact that I have African, Negroid, black blood in me. I know I am not an Arab in the same sense that a Syrian is an Arab. But that is not as problematic as some people try to present. I don't spend sleepless nights, for example, thinking whether I am an Arab or an African. I think there has been much fusion; all the characteristics have been fused in such a way that one is reconciled to the fact that one is a mixture of several strands."

Khalid al-Mubarak sees the problem not so much in the incongruity of northern self-identification and the definition of the national identity as in the southern demand for a redefinition that questions northern Sudanese self-identification as Arab:

My problem, the problem I see especially with some of our southern brothers and sisters is that they have moved away from the point of view on which I agree with them one hundred percent. I agree with them about shari'a. I agree with them about the broken promises of the North. I agree

about the necessity to redistribute wealth, industry, and everything. I agree one hundred percent. But then they go one step further. They say that in order for peace to

be achieved the Northerners should redefine themselves. I think this is going too far. Southerners have fought for their language, their culture and their religion, whether it be Christianity or any animist religion for example. I am quite prepared to accept that. But they take that and then say that something else remains. "You should say that you have nothing to do with the Arab world. You should say that you do not identify with the Palestinian question, for example!

What this protest overlooks is that the demand of the South is not for the northerners to abandon their Arabism and Islam, but rather that Islam and Arabism not be projected as the pillars of national identity on which one's place in the political, economic, social, and cultural life is predicated. This requires more than an asymmetrical acceptance of southern ethnic, cultural, or religious identity; It calls for a major restructuring of the national framework to be embracing and equitably accommodating, which Khalid al-Mubarak finds unreasonable.

Khalid al-Mubarak attributes the southern shift to what he sees as recent changes in the North-South balance of intellectual power and activity. "Why has this happened? My own interpretation is that the tables have been turned. In the past ... the northern intellectuals were superior. They had better education and the southerners were masakeen [impoverished /naive]. They had very few educated people and they were either dragged along or patronized or whatever by some of the northern politicians. Now ... there are many daring and creative southern intellectuals, and most of the northern intellectuals have atrophied or they are not keeping pace. The tables of 1947 have been turned. And I think some of the southerners want to rub salt in the wounds and say, 'Now, it is our turn to pay back in the same currency.'"

Khalid al-Mubarak's perspective is intriguing, whether or not it can be substantiated. Assuming that his analysis is accurate, it raises the question of why and how that happened. One can think of southern intellectuals catching up, but that the tables have been turned to the disadvantage of the North is hardly believable and certainly calls for explanation; at least it raises questions. Is southern intellectual creativity

displaying itself to the North or to neutral potential judges? And is the North atrophying because of lack of opportunities for growth or for reasons of complacency and self-satisfaction, while the South yearns for self-improvement as a disadvantaged group? Could the northern

superiority complex and the Arab-Islamic historical glory on which it thrives be proving counterproductive? Khalid's provocative statement, for which there is no proof of accuracy irresistibly suggests that this is an area worth probing.

Questioned on how he would explain the process that fostered in him the Arab-Islamic elements of identity whether it did not entail looking down on the African elements that were regarded as the bottom of the racial, cultural, and religious hierarchy and how he felt about the fact that elements still visible in him are looked down upon, Khalid al-Mubarak responded:

If part of me were looked down upon by others, I would not accept it. If it is being looked down upon by myself, then I would need psychiatric treatment. But I think many, even among the most enlightened Southern intellectuals, are unaware of the degree of awareness among the Northerners of the African strand of their character. I think there is a blind spot as far as this is concerned. We are also conscious of another dimension neglected by our Southern brothers; this is the consciousness of the black element within Arabic, Islamic countries about their [black] origin. The greatest writer in Arabic of all ages, Al-Jahis, wrote a very long treatise about "Fakhr al-Sudan ala al-Bidan" — Why Blacks are superior to Whites. And he himself was, according to some sources like the northern Sudanese [in features].

On the theme of black consciousness among Arabs of African origin, observations of the late scholar-diplomat Jamal Muhammad Ahmed suggest both integration into society and a lingering discrimination or marginalization, sometimes compensated for by excellent performance and defensive pride, as evidenced by the title of the above-mentioned book by al-Jahiz. Jamal Muhammad Ahmed observed, "An interesting field of research barely yet touched is the number, quality, trades, social status of the Africans who lived in Arabic speaking countries round Shat al-Arab, Muscat, Oman, and the Red Sea littoral; a 'rational kernel' can be gleaned, it is said, in the legends of African seafaring from Somalia, and Axum and 'a historical nucleus' may eventually be constructed on

what has been written by Greeks and Romans and in legendary books like the Kebra Nagast of the Ethiopians.”²¹

In another classic publication, al-Jahiz, according to Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, “reports an infuriated blackman chiding his Arab friends

who tend to lump all blackmen together: 'You have not seen the Zinj [Negro/black], the authentic Zinj. You have seen the slaves brought over from the coasts of Gombola, its valleys in the interior and jungles. Those, we do not hold in any regard; they are the riffraff, our slaves.'"22 Jamal Muhammad Ahmed acknowledged that there were intermarriages naturally, as evidenced by

the many mixed breeds, who gained prominence in public life during the early days of Islam. Amir Ibn al-Tofail's relief at finding the ten sons of Abd el-Muttalib, the prophet's grandfather, on the beat round the sacred shrines of Quraish in Mecca, is indicative. The tide of the new faith was being countered by them whom he delightedly described as "Big black camels; these alone can protect the house of the Gods" from the encroachment of the Muslims. "They were colossal and they were black," goes on the report. Similar traditions are told of Abu Talib's family the prophet's chief protector against his adversaries, father of Caliph Ali, whose vanity prevented him from embracing the new faith, though his affection and admiration for his ward was boundless.²³

And, as was explained earlier, Islam advanced the cause of equality and integration through the injunctions of the Prophet in which he proclaimed, "The son of a white woman is not superior to the son of a black woman; whichever of them fears God more, fares better"; and "An Arabic speaker is no better than one who is not; it is the fear of God that counts."²⁴

But of course realities then and certainly today reveal a significant gap between the ideals postulated by Islam or, for that matter, all religions and the stratifications based on race, religion, and culture. At least in the context of the northern Sudan, Arabism as an ethnic concept, Islam, and the Arabic language are inseparably bound together and, as Khalid al-Mubarak testifies, are deeply felt and cherished, despite the anomalies of Africanness in appearance.

Next to Khalid al-Mubarak in defense of the Arab-Islamic identity was the journalist Taha al-Noumahn. First, he conceded that identity problems in the Sudan may have "possible implications that may affect things like

marriage because of racism in the North. All these tribes have racist notions." But their racism, in his view, is tribal and not based on Arabism. Consequently al-Noumahn disputes that there is a crisis of national identity based on a conflict between Arabism and

Africanism in the Sudan. He attributes all the talk on this issue to the effect of the SPLM-SPLA ideological orientation. "I believe the identity issue cannot be decided by revolutions or meetings. It can only be decided by historical evolution. The current presentation or discussion of identity has stemmed from the emergence of the relatively recent rise of an armed revolutionary movement in the South which in itself is a result of the emergence of the Northern radicalism of the National Islamic Front (NIF) whose agenda has chosen Islam as the most fundamental aspect of Sudanese identity."

His views on this conflict of identities begins with a misleading liberal secular perspective: "The most important point to emphasize with regard to this issue is that of tolerance, religious and ethnic tolerance, and constitutional formulation of Arab-African cooperation among the different groups in the country that insures equal rights to all. In addition, it is vital that we distance ourselves from a theocratic state so as to avoid exacerbating our differences and conflicts! An-Noumahn then declared the vital role of Islam in northern Sudanese identity from which the northern establishment poses itself as inseparable: "I don't think it is possible to shed one's Islamic identity and Arab acculturation. This would be like shedding one's skin." Using a similar metaphor, Abel Alier, the respected Southern Sudanese leader and statesman, has said, "Islam ... is their skin. They say they will naturally not accept to be skinned, which sounds like it is too much a price to pay to secure and establish one nation."25

Malwal Leek sees the resistance of the South and the assertion of a competing African and Christian identity as a source of fear in the North that has generated a defensive exaggeration of the Arab-Islamic terror. But in his view they will have to compromise or risk the disintegration of the nation: "The traditionalists, I mean the sects, the Muslim Brothers, and others of similar orientation, fear two things: secularization and the ability of the peripheral groups to organize. The South seems to represent anti-Arabism and secularization, which undermine their power. They do not want to accept the idea of equality but then the price will be continuous instability. [Otherwise] they will have to [accept] that sources

of power must be reshaped.”

Malwal Leek believes that the position of the hard-liners cannot be sustained in the long run and that the momentum of the historical evolution and the sheer process of elimination will eventually give southern resistance movements their chance to shape the future of the

country: "Knowing the realities of the Sudan, combined with the forces which are against them, [the fundamentalists] will either give in, be overthrown or the country will be fragmented. The choices are very limited now. We tried the army and they failed; we tried the political parties three times and they failed. So, the only group which was left in the North was the Muslim Brothers... . People may agree to try these Africans and Christians. Lots of people may also coalesce and hit Garang. That is why we say that unless we come up with an agreed system, including all of us standing on equal footing, the Sudan is doomed."

In a recent publication, the Islamic scholar and member of the National Islamic Front Abdelwahab el-Affendi, intimated that the Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood) at one time considered the partition of the country. They saw this as the way out of the dilemma of the inherent divisiveness of the Islamic state and a way to overcome the obstacles that equitable unity imposes on the Islamic agenda of the brotherhood. "One point of view that emerged called for the separation of the south, since its demands appeared to have become the major obstacle to setting up an Islamic order in Sudan. The opposing view, which won in the end, advocated tackling the problem head-on. If the Sudanese Islamic state were to become a bastion for Islam in Africa, it had to accept the challenge of accommodating a non-Muslim minority."²⁶

What this argument misses is that the South sees the issue of Islam not as a purely religious matter, but as linked to Arab-Islamic hegemony in the Sudan. Claims of the Islamic majority are countered with claims of the African or non-Arab majority. If the non-Arab majority asserted itself, it would have to accommodate the Arab minority. But since that minority has been dominant, the question is whether it would accept accommodation as a minority. Here is where the issue of separation is sometimes still raised as an option that the fundamentalists might prefer to the threat of rejection or demotion. Indeed, the leader of the present regime, General Omar al-Bashir, is reported to have made statements, subsequently denied, endorsing secession for the South. What he did say was that his government wanted an end to the war and would be

prepared to consider any solution acceptable to the South even if that entailed separation. Since the declared position of the SPLM-SPLA was opposed to separation and no political force in the North has expressed support for the idea, the government has been politically obliged to disclaim any separatist inclinations and

has instead proclaimed federalism as a formula for coexistence. Although there is no argument between the warring factions on the proposed federalism, it has not been formally discussed or acted upon. The framework suggested by the government is not only dismissed as a one-sided imposition, but also as a form of autonomy misnamed as federalism.²⁷ Besides, the federal framework is envisaged as Islamic, and sharia would continue as the law of the land, with states opting out where appropriate. Minorities would be able to apply the laws of their communities or their religious affiliations only in personal matters, a reversal of the situation that has prevailed since condominium rule.

Khalid al-Mubarak postulates an approach that would accommodate diversities within a loose notion of unity between the South and the North, whatever the arrangement is called. First, he begins by defining the North inclusively: "By North I include the West and the East, because most of the men of religion in the central and northern Sudan are actually from the West and their Islam is more strict than our Islam [in the North]. So, any statements trying to say that the West may separate from Sudan and join the South in an African complex I think are wishful thinking and talking in cuckoo land. When the crunch comes, Westerners are more strict in their Islam than other parts of the North."

To accommodate diversity, Khalid al-Mubarak postulated the devolution of power in both domestic and foreign affairs. "If the South doesn't want anything to do with the Arab League, for example, they should be allowed to opt out, and any other region which would like to opt out should do so."

Questioned on how such a system would harmonize with the conventional legal concepts of sovereignty in which foreign relations fall within the exclusive domain of the central or federal government, Khalid al-Mubarak responded: "I am not sure; I am not a man of law. But I think that when preparing for the constitutional conference, this is the sort of thing which people should thrash out. Legal experts should agree on a form, even if there is no model system now in the world. After all, the Sudan had the Condominium rule, which was almost unique in the world. We can devise a system for our unique coexistence."

Al-Mubarak goes beyond that to sanction partition if arrangements for mutual coexistence prove unacceptable: "In the last analysis, if they say we don't want one country, then it is not in the Koran or the Bible

or anything that the Sudan should be one country. Unity should be voluntary and based on the satisfaction of the different components of the country that within this unity their own identity is being expressed and not suppressed in any way.”

These are the competing perceptions and models of identity facing the challenges of nation building in the Sudan. What options are open to the country? One can conclude, as a Sudanese scholar, Kamal Osman Saleh, did when he wrote, “The lack of progress in the Sudan during 1985–9 suggests that it is virtually impossible for a viable system of government and administration to be created, let alone survive, in a deeply divided and heterogeneous nation in which political parties are primarily organized on sectarian, ethnic, and regional lines.”²⁸

Abdelwahab el-Affendi, reaching the same conclusion, wrote, “It is thus unlikely in the given circumstances, that the conflicting demands of the two major camps could eventually be satisfied within one state... . A multi-state solution may be the only way to preserve what is left of that once much loved oasis, and could be the only substitute to an illusory ‘united country,’ like the costly fiction of Lebanon and Cyprus.”²⁹

There is an alternative policy line of approach based on the analysis of the assimilationist trend in the North, the resistance in the South, their implications in foreign relations, and the search for a common identity. This alternative would be to recognize that the present concepts of identity on both sides are based on race, religion, and culture, that the nation is divided on these grounds, and that unity can only come about if the fundamental notions of the national character — identity — are restructured to accommodate the realities of the Sudanese configurations on equitable bases. Whether or not this is possible remains the unanswered question.

PERCEPTIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

The examination of Sudanese views indicates that although the crisis of national identity has become widely recognized and the issue has been consistently placed on the agenda for dialogue, negotiation, or the

postulated constitutional conference, there is still considerable debate or controversy surrounding the identity crisis among the Sudanese themselves, northerners and southerners alike.

On the issue of the factors determining identity, northern respondents were nearly all reluctant to give any racial basis to Arabism, but they recognize that there are biological undertones in people's own self-perceptions. They even admit an element of racism in those perceptions, which they condemn not only as morally wrong, but also as factually baseless. Many of them report negative experiences of rejection or denial of their Arab identity in the Arab world. Nearly all advocate a uniting concept of identity that is more representatively Sudanese in its diversities, but with obvious predisposition toward Arab culture and language as bases for building an otherwise nationally oriented Sudanese model of identity. The role of religion in public affairs remains a very sensitive and divisive issue, and most of those interviewed displayed at least a nominally liberal attitude toward the problem. However, the public articulation of this liberalism remains problematic, especially for politicians.

On the critical issue of whether the country is suffering from an identity crisis or not, some admit that there is a crisis and are very concerned about it, and some claim that there is no such crisis and that the issue is the invention of intellectuals, not the concern of the average Sudanese. Some southerners dramatize by stating that the North-South conflict is not the result of people not knowing what they are, but rather the result of the domination of the one by the other. They see that as a political and not an identity crisis. However, those who argue that there is no crisis of national identity tend to lump together a number of factors in a way that clouds and confuses the issues. Once the clouds are cleared, they themselves reveal an acute awareness of the crisis, but one that touches raw nerves and is more easily denied than confronted.

It is true that most Sudanese are not actively engaged in analyzing their identities and the way those identities affect their place in society. But even here, one must distinguish between the North and the South, for while average northerners may not be preoccupied with the issue because it does not adversely affect their status in the Arab-Islamic community average southerners are acutely aware of the fact that their African, non-Arab, and non-Muslim identity in the Arab-Islamic

environment of the Sudan is a definite disadvantage. Some southern individuals shed their non-Arab, non-Islamic identity adjust themselves to the environment, and pass into the relative comfort of the northern mold, even as lesser equals. But most southerners politically resist as-

similation even if they have been converted to Islam, have become fluent in Arabic, and have zealously mastered the basic norms and mores of Arab culture. Nor can they fully be accepted as Arabs, even with those adjustments. This can be said to be the direct result of the role of descent or genealogy in determining identification. Cultural assimilation and conversion to Islam, though important, are not enough to make one an Arab, far less a full-blooded noble member of the race.

Nor can one argue unequivocally that northerners are not consciously concerned with matters of their identity in the light of the obvious gap between self-perceptions and contrasting realities that are being increasingly pointed out to them, both at home and abroad. Of course, they may not be aware of an identity crisis on either the personal or the national level, but they are keenly conscious of their Arabness and their Islamic religion, which together give them a profound sense of personal, collective, and comparative superiority over their non-Arab and non-Muslim compatriots, a fact that breeds resentment and animosity on the part of the non-Arab population. But worse, they are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that what they think they are, what they in fact appear to be, and what others think of them are all very different.

The other factor in the controversy is the question of whether the average northern Sudanese is intent on imposing Arab-Islamic identity on the South. Here again it must be conceded that despite the racism and chauvinism of their Arab-Islamic sentiments, northern Sudanese in general are not preoccupied with molding the nation into their image and imposing their religion and culture on the non-Arab and non-Muslim population of the South or elsewhere. It is members of the ruling elite who project and vigorously promote the Arab-Islamic agenda. Nevertheless, the popular response seems to endorse the objective and support any measures advocated as if they were religiously ordained. What is critical in this instance, however, is not the preoccupation of the average Sudanese, but the policies of the government, the manner in which it manipulates the racial, cultural, and religious sentiments associated with identity, and the general effect of those policies on the nation as a whole. It is therefore untenable to argue that identity is not an

issue that concerns the Sudanese public and therefore should not be a subject of policy debate.

There are also those, who, using the cultural definition of Arabism,

argue that there is no identity crisis because there are no racial differences implied in the northern Arabness and that the cleavage with the non-Arabs is only cultural and therefore not as profound as the term crisis implies. This line of argument not only plays down the significance of cultural differences or the imposition of one culture on others, but also implies that because there is no objective basis for racial differences subjective racial consciousness and prejudices cannot be objectively manifest. Factors behind racial sentiments, however unsupported by objective evidence, are thus dismissed as inconsequential. What these people should be saying is that there is no basis for racial differentiation in the Sudan, that racial sentiments are therefore out of place, and that the national identity should consequently be perceived in nonracial terms. But of course even this argument, while it removes race as a factor in conceptualizing national identity, would not warrant the imposition of the cultural concept of Arabism as the dominant factor in the definition of an all-embracing concept of national identity for the Sudan.

A related factor in the debate is the normatively ambiguous assertion that identity is not an issue, but what is really meant is that it should not be allowed to be an issue. The concern behind this line of argument is that identity symbols, such as race, ethnicity, tribe, culture, and religion, are being manipulated by the political elite, that such concepts of identity are not a matter of conscious concern for the people in general, and that they should therefore not be tabled as issues for public debate, since that would give them undue weight and legitimacy. This line of thought is well intentioned, but its ambiguity tends to operate against its own objective. The two issues that are confused by this argument should be clearly demarcated and separated. It is one thing to argue that certain identity factors should not be considered relevant in public affairs; it is quite another thing to say that they are not in fact relevant at all. One is a value judgment; the other is a statement of fact. Those who make this case should really be articulating a three-pronged argument: first, that the average Sudanese, despite sentiments of pride in their identities, are not concerned about imposing their racial, ethnic, and religious identity on the nation; second, that the political elites are in fact doing so in exploitation of Arab-Islamic or African-Animist-Christian sentiments; and

third, that such divisive identity issues should be excluded from the public policy agenda.

Finally, there is concern that debate over the identity issue distracts from the real issue of power sharing, softens the political confrontation, and, by implication, delays the solution, since the crisis of identity cannot be immediately resolved, but can only be approached from a long-term perspective. What these people miss is that there is no contradiction between recognizing the identity factor and giving priority to the power dimension. The history of Arabization and Islamization indicates that power, the religious factor, and wealth distribution are intertwined. The privileged power, religious, and wealth positions of the Arab Muslims won them respect and affiliation with prestigious families and enhanced their overall status in society. Power is therefore critical to the determination of identity issues and the motivation with which identities are flexibly molded. If the power framework were restructured in favor of a uniting concept of "Sudanism" free of the divisive symbols of identity it is safe to predict that the newly postulated concept of Sudanese identity would quickly capture the imagination of the people as a basis for collective self-identification. A significant part of this vision was in fact realized during the early phase of the Nimeiri regime under the Addis Ababa agreement. The undoing of this delicate balance in favor of the Arab-Islamic agenda triggered the return to arms in the struggle for power, this time at the center.

Because of the decisive role of power in shaping identities, the equations of military power in the civil war are in themselves significant factors in the prospects of redefining the national identity. The fact that the South has fought for nearly four decades and has become militarily stronger over the years gives credibility to the identity for which it is fighting. With that power and credibility comes increased respect from the North. Doubts about northern success to whatever degree in forcing its agenda on the nation encourage a reevaluation of the current situation and the prevailing notions of identity that have provoked the conflict. But by the same token, the prospect of restructuring power and redefining national identity threatens the beneficiaries of the status quo, who then become highly motivated to mobilize forces along the existing identity lines, thereby polarizing the nation.

While the molding of a common, workable identity is a delicate long-term process, there is no contradiction between the accelerating role of power in effecting the change and the need to address the identity factor in a flexible time frame — immediate, mid-term, and long-range. The ultimate objective is to create conditions that safeguard and

promote human dignity in a free society in which justice and equality prevail without any distinction on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. These are principles that both sides avow, even as they remain polarized on their interpretation and implementation. On the one side, the SPLM-SPLA is espousing the secular agenda, and on the other side, the ruling military regime of the National Islamic Front is set on the establishment of an Islamic state. The dominance of Islamic fundamentalism or revivalism poses a dilemma in the modern context. The predominant, though by no means unanimous opinion of those interviewed, southerners and northerners alike, tends to favor the separation of religion from state. Judging from the political trends in the country, however, theirs is likely to be the dissenting position since the politically dominant forces either genuinely believe in the Islamic agenda or dare not oppose it openly.

Under those circumstances, two opposing points of view seem almost equally valid. One is that the non-Muslim community has no right to tell the Muslims not to follow what they perceive as the dictate of their faith, which is to be governed by shari'a in all aspects of their lives, personal and public. But by the same token, the Muslim community cannot expect the non-Muslims to accept an Islamic system in which they must inevitably be subordinate. Short of imposition by force, the only way to resolve the dilemma is to design a system of mutual coexistence in nominal unity or through outright partition.

Chapter12 Conclusions

The Sudan has been afflicted with a civil war between the Arab-Muslim North and the African-Animist-Christian South for nearly four decades, punctuated by a ten-year pause that brought some relief and useful lessons of what is possible during peacetime. It is now widely acknowledged that an acute crisis of national identity is at the core of the conflict. Answers to the critical question of whether the Sudan is Arab or African have serious implications for the sharing of power, the distribution of resources, and the opportunities for participation.

Positions seem to harden as the country continues to bleed dangerously. Loss of life through conflict and conflict-related famine has taken an enormous toll. At the same time, insecurity brought on by the disintegrating political situation and a virtually collapsing economy has wrought havoc on the nation. Under these circumstances, it is urgent for scholars and observers to help the search for peace by clarifying the policy issues involved and the options available.

THE CHALLENGE

The crisis of national identity in the Sudan emanates from the fact that the politically dominant and economically privileged northern Sudanese Arabs, although the products of Arab-African genetic mixing and a minority in the country as a whole, see themselves as primarily Arab, deny the African element in them, and seek to impose their self-perceived identity throughout the country. This includes the indigenous non-Arab communities in the North and the entire southern population, which together constitute the overwhelming national majority. The ruling Arab minority thus seeks to define the national character along the lines of their self-perception, itself a distortion of their composite identity as a mixed Arab-African race in which the African element is more visible, but actively denied.

Building on internal perceptions, the dominant Sudanese Arabs see the extension of their world along Arab-Islamic lines, with the African connection as merely an imperative of geography and regional diplomacy, but without the sentiments of nationalism that bind the Arab Muslim world or, for that matter, black Africa. The more this Arab-Islamic nationalistic perception is challenged or even questioned by the non-Arab majority, the more vigorously and coercively it is asserted in the country and supported with moral and material backing from the Arab Muslim world. The establishment of an Islamic state in the Sudan is the culmination of this escalating process of defensive self-assertiveness, which has become increasingly and violently offensive.

In sharp contrast to the North, southerners see themselves as unambiguously African, racially and culturally, with Western influences reflected in Christianity and secularism as newly acquired elements of modern identity that provide the basis for Southern unity in nation building. Just as Arabism and Islam have been used to unify the tribal communities of the North, a widening concept of Africanism with its adopted Western cultural elements has become the core principle for consolidating the defense against the imposition of the Arab-Islamic identity on the country. In this sense, although there are other vitally important aspects to the North-South cleavage, the civil war between the North and the South is essentially a conflict of the identities that determine one's place in society and provide the basis for allocation in the distribution of power and resources. In this war of identities, the South has been joined by the non-Arab, though Muslim, communities on the North-South borders, notably the Nuba of Southern Kordofan and the Ingassana of Southern Blue Nile. Clearly this makes the war not merely one of resistance to the imposition of Islam, but also a racial or ethnic struggle against domination by people claiming to be racially and culturally Arab and superior to the black Africans, with whom they do not identify.

The only time when the Sudanese from the North and the South came close to mutual acceptance and respect, not as one people or society, but as different racial, ethnic, and religious groups that could live together

in a unified country and foster a national identity, was during the ten-year period of the Addis Ababa Agreement (1972–83), when relative peace and security prevailed. Even then, autonomy for the South, with a minimum role for the southerners at the center, meant the subordination of the South to the North and of African

identity to the Arab Muslim identity. This subordination was ultimately manifested in the unilateral manner in which the central government, and more precisely President Nimeiri himself, abrogated the agreement and in September 1983 imposed shari'a on the country as a whole.

The challenge now confronting the Sudanese in general and the leadership in particular over the crisis of national identity can be summarized in a sequence of arguments. All Sudanese have their primary roots in the black African tribes, a patrimony that is visible in their color of skin. In the North, the African genetic heritage has been predominantly mixed by reproduction between the incoming Arab male traders and the indigenous population, whose progeny became identified with the Arab ancestral heritage. This mixture has produced visible differences in skin pigmentation in a range from the esteemed Arab model to the degraded African model. As a consequence of the racial stratification behind these models, assimilation to Arab culture in the North has produced a self-conception that, despite the visible evidence to the contrary, denies or accepts grudgingly the primary African genetic origins.

By conceding autonomy to the South and recognizing its non-Arab identity as a significant element in the identity of the country the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 moderated this entrenched denial of Africanism. This limited concession was, however, dictated by the situation in the South and was not a genuine recognition of the facts within the North, which is why it was interrupted with a vengeance by a renewed assertion of the Arab-Islamic identity that imposed shari'a on the country and the Islamic military regime that is now in power.

The second argument is that there is a yet-unexplored reality of Sudanese identity that is represented in the racial, ethnic, and cultural composition of the country, reflecting both amalgamation and diversity of elements. Although concealed by the prevailing perceptions of identity and therefore not fully used to foster national unity, this reality was partially tapped during the brief period in which the country enjoyed peace as a result of the Addis Ababa Agreement.

The third argument recognizes that despite the potential of exploring and using a more representative national identity, the political forces appear deeply entrenched in their self-perceived identities that have evolved over the centuries and have come into conflict most recently during the decades since independence. The northern Sudanese

Arabs are aware that their Arabism is often only skin deep and that the threat of demotion into the inferior status that they have abandoned is ever present. It is easy to see how that threat can be a source of great insecurity, especially among the elites who derive tangible benefits from their privileged identity and stand to lose in the redefinition. It is, therefore, probable that the elites with vested interests in the status quo will resist the postulated process of self-discovery, since it entails uncertainties and apprehensions about reassessment and reclassification of identities. The implications of such a change could extend into patterns of participation, production, and distribution.

Realism dictates the fourth argument: unless the country experiences a dramatic change in these competing and conflicting self-perceptions, its unity appears unsustainable. Should the Sudanese continue to be uncompromisingly committed to their present symbols of identity and the positions they have adopted in their defense, then they will need either to formulate a constitutional framework that loosely accommodates those identities or to acknowledge that they are incompatible. This last choice would make partition the only alternative. Too much blood has been shed and untold suffering endured over the conflict of national identities and the elusive national unity. Neither collective identity nor national unity is worth that price.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Among the alternatives generally suggested for the resolution of the identity crisis are integration along the lines of assimilation and coexistence within a framework that accommodates diversity within unity. While the North is the product of African-Arab assimilation and is consistently bent on extending the process to the South, the very existence of the dualism underscores a hostile, historic confrontation in which the South has so far successfully resisted assimilation by the North. Although both sides have experienced cross-cultural influences, more visible in the North than in the South, this bitter history has disposed them to see nothing in common and to perceive their differences in terms that are mutually disdainful.

Northern prejudices against the South are pervasive and easily revealed in their collective identification of the Negro as an inferior race, the traditional source for the slave. While the Arabs have had the

power to assert their political dominance and material superiority, southerners deeply despise them and look down on them. This mutual disdain, coupled with geographical or territorial separation, makes coexistence extremely difficult. Under these circumstances, the preservation of the country as one entity in nominal unity that lacks consensus should not and cannot be an absolute objective. The people of the South have suffered at the hands of their northern compatriots appalling indignities and humiliation in which racism and religious intolerance, rampant but always denied, have been, in varying degrees, the driving impulses. While the northern Sudanese have now grudgingly come to recognize the grievances of the South, the level of awareness and readiness to correct past wrongs remains grossly inadequate.

Resolution of the country's crisis will require respect for human dignity, expressed in mutual recognition and regard for each other's identity, cultural values, integrity of the individual, and equality of opportunity, without discrimination on the bases of race, ethnicity, color, religion, culture, or gender. In operational terms, respect for human dignity can be translated into fundamental human rights, civil liberties, and democratic freedoms. Respect for human dignity cannot be said to prevail in a country where, as things stand today, a southerner cannot dream of becoming the head of state, whatever his personal qualifications; where the most a southerner can expect, and this also rarely, is to be a second vice president, with a first vice president, always a northerner, poised to take over, should exigencies require; where no single undersecretary of a ministry is a southerner; where jocular language, sometimes pronounced in earnest, still regards being black as synonymous with being a slave; and where being a southerner is both a racial and a class identification. Although attitudes of racial prejudice and discrimination are deeply rooted and cannot be altered overnight, radical changes in the political, legal, and institutional framework are possible and are also capable of accelerating the evolution of attitudes toward a mutual respect for the dignity of all citizens. This is an indispensable condition for national unity. It is also important to bear in mind that southerners are not a minority dispersed into the country, who, as individuals, must accept and adjust to the realities; the South is a geographical entity that is severable from the

North and therefore is not inherently part and parcel of the Arab-Islamic North.

Postulating human dignity is, therefore, not an exercise in utopian

verbalism; it requires a serious commitment to a definable concept of equity and justice within a democratic system that enjoys legitimacy in the eyes of the people, and where persuasive authority rather than coercive force is the means of exercising legitimate control. Even the most cursory look at the Sudan, both in its history and in its contemporary political, economic, and social realities, will reveal gross disparities and inequities reflecting the Arab-African dichotomy. No people who are not decisively defeated, subjugated, and subordinated could passively live under those conditions without pathologically demeaning themselves. The waves of liberation movements from the South must be understood and appreciated in this context.

The inequities and injustices underlying the crisis of national identity, which has become aggravated by the divisive policies of the Islamic trend, are evident in the racial and regional stratification seen especially between northerners and southerners. These inequities and injustices are also apparent in the discreet but pervasive manner in which identity affects the roles of individuals and groups in shaping and sharing power and wealth and in determining participation in the society at large.

While unity is recognized, endorsed, and advocated by both the central government and the armed opposition, an overriding commitment to human dignity would require major structural changes to remedy deep-seated national problems if the country is to be genuinely and equitably united.

REVIEW OF THE ISSUES

The Sudanese have for some time now been in agreement on the items to be included on the agenda of any constitutional conference, negotiations, or discussions on the conflict. These include: the sharing of power and national resources, especially between the center and the regions; the system of government, in particular the form of democracy suitable for the country; the relationship between religion and the state, specifically the role of Islamic law, or shari'a; the definition of national identity, particularly as it relates to Arabism, Africanism, Islam, Christianity, and indigenous belief systems; and principles of foreign

policy, especially as they touch on external linkages to the diverse elements within the Sudan. Though it is identified as a separate issue,

identity cuts across all the issues and is therefore the central strand in the web.

There is also a degree of consensus on the broad lines of action that need to be taken on some of the issues. For instance, no one questions that the peripheral regions of the country have suffered in the past from gross inequities and injustices in the sharing of power and the distribution of wealth, services, employment opportunities, and programs of social and economic development. It is therefore widely recognized that they should receive remedial preferences in any future arrangements. It is also widely accepted that the country is too large and diverse to be governed through a centralized system. Decentralization — regionalism, federalism, or some similar arrangement — has therefore become imperative.

There is also an increasing recognition, though it is not clearly articulated as a consensus, that past experiences with Western-type democracy far from solving the pressing problems of the country were responsible for the vicious cycle the country has been going through. Parliamentary democracy has always brought into power religiously based sectarian parties, which enjoyed the blind following of their devout followers, but whose factional preoccupations constrained their visions, leading to their failures in addressing urgent national problems. This has repeatedly prompted the military to seize power, often resulting in a dictatorship which, on two occasions, provoked popular uprisings that forced the government out of power and restored liberal democracy. The 1989 coup, engineered by an alliance between factions of the army and the National Islamic Front (NIF), is the latest in this civilian-military rotation of power. Most Sudanese see the resulting regime as an unacceptable dictatorship, and a wide consensus exists for the need to develop alternative models. What these alternatives are, or should be, remains an open question that has not been adequately and freely discussed, even though the regime has engaged in its own internal efforts at restructuring “democracy.”

The relationship between religion and the state has emerged as the most

controversial issue in the conflict. The focus is on the role of shari'a, which, carried to its logical conclusion, means the creation of an Islamic state. While the present regime is the most committed to this ideological position, the dominant political forces in the North, specifically the religiously based sectarian parties, support positions ranging from an almost equal commitment to shari'a to ambivalent

support of accommodations to the non-Muslim South. In the Koka Dam declaration of March 1986, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM-SPLA) and most of the political parties, including Sadiq al-Mahdi's Umma party, agreed on the abrogation of the Islamic "September Laws," in the context of this ambivalent accommodation. The notable exceptions were Sayyid Muhammad Osman al-Mirghani's Democratic Unionist party (DUP) and Dr. Hassan al-Turabi's National Islamic Front (NIF).

The euphemism "September Laws" was a clever ploy, intended to insinuate that those laws were not really Islamic, but, quite the contrary, a perversion and exploitation of Islam. The implication was that only on those grounds could they be abrogated. Even then, the position of the parties was that they would be replaced by more genuine Islamic laws. Nevertheless, the agreement was never carried out. The pressing need to accommodate the South led to a further agreement between Sayyid Muhammad Osman al-Mirghani and Dr. John Garang, leader of the SPLM-SPLA, on November 16, 1988, to freeze the September Laws. The arrangement, however, generated considerable controversy and a series of political crises between the DUP on the one hand and the Umma and the NIF on the other hand, and also between the Umma and the NIF. One of the problems of leadership in the Sudan is that no single leader has the conviction and the moral authority to rise and tell the nation that religion must be separated from the state in the interest of national unity. Since it is often privately conceded that such a separation would be necessary to save the nation, failure to confront the issue as a matter of public policy must be attributed to lack of leadership with the moral courage to do so. The view is generally held that Sadiq's government was on the verge of abrogating the September Laws when the military took over on June 30, 1989. The NIF is alleged to have been either a party in planning the coup or at least a partner in its execution and consolidation. It is difficult to corroborate the degree to which the government and in particular the prime minister were committed to the envisaged abrogation and whether or not alternative Islamic laws would have been introduced. Experience clearly shows that this was at best a controversial exercise despite the good intentions of at least some of the

participants.

Virtually all the leading personalities in northern politics assert that no Muslim leader can dare to abrogate Islamic laws with impunity, since Islam dictates that there be no separation between religion and

the state. Thus once shari'a has been introduced, it is difficult to remove; it is said to be easier to avoid promulgating it in the first place. When Sayyid Muhammad Osman al-Mirghani of the DUP seemed prepared to freeze the Islamic laws, he consulted the Islamic scholar Sheikh al-Azhar in Cairo about the propriety of such a move. The sheikh blessed the idea with the fatwa, a religious authorization. It is unclear whether Sayyid al-Mirghani envisioned some alternative form of religious law or a reversion to the secular codes that were introduced by the British.

It would, however, underestimate the issue of religion if it were seen in isolation from all the other issues and in particular the critical question of national identity and the combined racial and cultural dimensions of the Arab-Islamic culture, which is being projected as nationally representative. Indeed, religion has become a symbol of all that identifies the parties, racially and culturally, and determines their relative positions in the power hierarchy and in the distribution patterns. It has also become a critical factor in foreign policy and in external linkages to internal symbols of identity. Religion in the Sudanese political context is no longer a matter of personal ethics, piety, spirituality, or morality, but a lethal weapon in the power struggle. This is the outcome of a historical evolution that has shaped the contrasting, and now conflictual, perspectives within and between the North and the South.

EVOLUTION OF IDENTITIES

The composite identities of race, ethnicity, and culture that now divide the country into Arabs and Africans, Muslims and non-Muslims, and the different agendas within these categories, are the result of the processes of Arabization and Islamization in the North, the limits of their extension to the South, and the conflicting perspectives on the nation that have resulted from the dual evolution of identities, including their internal factionalization.

The division of the country into its African and Arab identities is a result of northern Islamization and Arabization on the one hand, and southern resistance to the imposition of this northern perspective on the other hand. Arabization and Islamization built on the existing social structures

and patterns of behavior, embracing even the indige-

nous belief systems and practices. What emerged from the process is uniquely Sudanese. Most of the Arab tribes of the North do not resemble their fellow Arabs in North Africa and the Middle East. In fact, they look very much like black Africans in most countries within the Sudanic belt cutting across the continent, from Ethiopia and Somalia in the east to Nigeria, Mali, and Senegal in the west. Nevertheless, Sudanese Arabs are intensely proud of their Arabism and trace their genealogies back to Arabia, in some instances to the tribe, even the family of the Prophet Muhammad, much of which is a fiction that cannot be substantiated. And despite their liberal and tolerant indigenized Sufist attitude toward other people's religious beliefs and practices, the Muslim masses of the Sudan are deeply religious in their paganized version of Islam, which is similar to the traditional African religions, with belief in the spiritual powers of the ancestors and other earthly deities, and is very different from the orthodox Koranic version advocated by the elites of the Arab-Islamic North.

The North was not uniformly affected ethnically and culturally by Arabization and Islamization. Some groups, notably the Fur and the Nuba in the west and to a lesser extent the Beja in the east, were not much affected by Arabization, although they adopted Islam with a zeal that was reinforced by their indigenous belief systems. Even in the far north the Nubians have retained their language and sense of identity, despite the adoption and integration of Arab elements. What makes these non-Arab anomalies in the North particularly significant is that Islam in the Sudan, unlike Islam in other sub-Saharan African countries with Muslim majorities, tends to be associated with Arabism as a composite concept of race, ethnicity, and culture. However, these non-Arab pockets of the Islamic North, though among the most devout, tend to be more tolerant of diversity and less orthodox in their approach to Islam in much the same way black African countries, even those with Islamic majorities, are tolerant of religious diversity. A good example is Senegal, where the population is overwhelmingly Islamic, but where a Christian, Leopold Senghor, unquestionably one of the greatest African leaders, was elected president.

Arabization and Islamization of the kind that transformed the North did not extend to the South, even though some cross-cultural influences occurred. Contact between the two parts of the country was largely characterized by hostilities, ranging from the invasions of slave hunters to attempts by successive governments to expand their domain

southward. Although some positive interaction took place, the two parts of the country remained distinct, seeing hardly anything in common.

The North-South dualism has been confirmed, reinforced, and deepened by successive regimes over the past two centuries. In the North, although the British inevitably had a secularist influence on the Muslim community, they endorsed the traditional link between Islam and the state. Fearful of neo-Mahdist revivalism, the colonial government showed sensitivity to the Arab-Islamic sentiments and even characterized itself as Islamic to gain legitimacy. Nevertheless, Islam, and in particular its revivalist or fundamentalist version, was a factor in the nationalist struggle against colonialism. While the leaders of the traditionalist religions were coopted by the British to render them more pliant in their approach to the independence movement, the young militant Islamists found inspiration in the past glory of Islam and its legacy of anti-Westernism and anti-Christianity.

In the South the British adopted a separatist policy that closed off the region, discouraged Arabism and Islam from infiltrating, and encouraged Christian missionary education, with vernacular languages and English as the media of instruction. And while the North developed economically and politically the South was denied any development. In 1947, only eight years before independence, the separatist policy was officially reversed.

Following independence, various governments tried to foster national unity through an enforced uniformity, which entailed applying the policies of Arabization and Islamization to the South. What they did not realize was that the South was not the spiritual vacuum that the Christian missionaries had assumed and tried to fill. Quite apart from the educated southerners' having developed more deference for their African identity with its spiritual and moral values, Christianity had become adopted both in its own right as a religion and as an effective defense with which to resist the threat of Arab-Islamic assimilation. The more the threat from the North loomed over the South, the stronger became the sense of a new identity welding notions of Africanism with the more recently acquired Christian and Western cultural values. The fact that Christianity,

both in principle and in the way it was introduced to the South, was in full harmony with secularism, made this strategic blend particularly appropriate to the southern perspective on the relationship between religion and the state.

PHASES IN THE EVOLUTION

The Revolution for National Salvation, with its NIF allies, and the SPLM-SPLA in its diverse configurations, should be seen as the culmination of a process that has gone through three phases — traditional, transitional, and modern. Arabization and Islamization in the North began with the original interaction and mutual integration between the incoming Arab traders and the Sudanese tribal communities. The parochialism of tribal society was broadened, but not replaced, by Islam, first through the indigenized Sufi tariqas and later through the Mahdist revolution, which also ended up as a religious sect. Sectarian structures and loyalties then linked with the tribal system and wider regional identities to provide grass-roots support for the religiously based political parties that began to emerge with the movement for independence. This support was more a gratuitous loyalty than it was a reciprocal relationship between the leaders and their followers. Sharif Harir writes, for example, that the loyalty of the Dar Furians to the Mahdi family and thus to the Umma party was historically and remains “so strong as to defy rational explanation....”¹ This linkage between sectarian politics and the rural masses was also manipulated and reinforced by the condominium rulers and the moderate elements among the modern nationalist elite in their efforts to influence the political process to their advantage.

Radical movements, both secular and religious, grew up in the North in opposition to sectarianism. They were seen by the more modern elements as being a conservative front that was antithetic to nation building. Among these radical groups were the Communist party, the Republican Brothers, and the Muslim Brothers. The Communist party was virtually incapacitated by Nimeiri's onslaught after the abortive coup of 1971 in which it was implicated. The Republican Brothers were demoralized and paralyzed when Nimeiri's government invoked shari'a and executed their leader, Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, on January 18, 1985, for apostasy. The Muslim Brothers, who reorganized themselves into the National Islamic Front after Nimeiri's overthrow, remained the only radical, antisectarian political movement still functioning with visible effectiveness. Their goal is not only to establish an Islamic state but also

to achieve a true liberation from the Christian-oriented, un-Islamic character of the colonial structure inherited at independence. Revivalism for them is therefore a form of rediscovery, a

legitimization process that aims at building the society on Islamic values and institutions.

In the South, the process has moved from the tribal organizations of traditional society which the British used for their conservative policies of indigenous evolution, to the newly educated class, whose identity has been shaped by Christianity and Western culture. Although these external influences did not eradicate indigenous values and institutions, they broadened the vision of the educated class along the lines of defensive reaction to northern domination and threats of assimilation. The vision now postulated by the SPLM-SPLA, which is essentially that of a Western model of a modern, secular, and democratic nation-state, is the latest phase in this evolution of regional identity that is now competing for application to the nation.

Of course these phases are by no means exclusively sequential. On the contrary, they overlap and coexist as they feed into each other. Traditional values and institutions interact with new concepts through the transitional phase, and while they come into more open conflict with modernizing forces, they tend to be resilient and tenacious. This in part explains the cycles in which sectarianism and tribalism have persistently dominated the democratic process.

Nor are the models that have emerged in the North and the South monolithic. On the contrary, the mere fact that the various phases overlap, coexist, and even fuse indicates the diversity of perspectives within the North and the South. In both areas, tribal and regional or provincial rivalries, aggravated by differences between individual leaders and various interest groups, persist.

The evolution of the modern Sudan has culminated in a vision from the South that is contesting a vision from the North, with certain borderline cases based on racial or ethnic anomalies, among them the Nuba, the Ingassana, the Fur, and to a lesser extent the Beja, whose identities are more African than the mainstream Arab factions. The two visions diverge ideologically on a system of government, specifically with respect to such

issues as democracy versus military rule and the role of religion in the state.

OBSTACLES TO CONSENSUS

The obstacles to the resolution of the conflict emanate from the themes in the preceding analysis of issues and the evolution of the now con-

flicting perspectives on those issues. While the conflict is manifested in various forms and at differing levels, the most critical dimension is the civil war between the government and the SPLM-SPLA. Differences on the issue of shari'a now seem to be the most intractable aspect of the conflict, but only as a symbol of other problem areas.

The present government position on religion cannot be seen as a barrier to the resolution of the conflict in isolation from the historical background. Not only has the Islamic agenda represented by the government been shared in varying degrees by successive regimes since Nimeiri; the debate over the issue of shari'a or an Islamic constitution goes back to the earliest constitutional discussions since independence. If one considers the history of the country as a whole, the degree might vary, but the role of Islam in the state has always been an issue, even under British rule, which ambivalently combined separation between religion and the state with orchestrated political deference for Islam almost as a state religion. The main difference, however, is that the revivalists or fundamentalists have sharpened the debate by becoming uncompromising in their pursuit of the Islamic agenda despite the necessity to interact with and accommodate non-Muslims on national and international levels.

The fact that a sizable portion of the country is non-Muslim gives the crisis of religious identity with respect to the state its most critical dimensions. Indeed, while the debate on the role of religion in the state affects virtually all Arab-Islamic states, what makes the case of the Sudan exceptionally problematic is the sharp division of the country between those who identify themselves with Islam and the associated notion of Arabism and those whose identity derives primarily from resisting Arab-Islamic hegemony. It is not integration or assimilation into the Arab-Islamic mold per se that southerners are resisting; it is the domination associated with its imposition. Under conditions of peaceful interaction between the North and the South, Arabization and Islamization would stand a better chance of being adopted through a gradual and harmonious process of cross-cultural enrichment. As things are now, resistance to their imposition and the threat of imminent

assimilation proved to be the most formidable barriers to the establishment of an Islamic state in the Sudan. Even those northerners opposed to the application of shari'a tend to justify their position with reference to the South. This means that the North-South confrontation is shielding the northerners and distracting them from confronting the religious question internally, instead of seeing it as merely a North-South issue.

To northern fundamentalists, Islam dictates that there should be no separation between religion and the state. When people the fundamentalists consider a minority tell them not to adhere to the tenets of their religion, to adopt instead the Western notion of secularism, and worse, to try to achieve this objective by force, they react with hostility that reinforces Islamic fundamentalism.

The irony is that while the Islamic trend claims to reflect the will of the majority the present regime has had to impose the Islamic agenda with military force, denying democratic freedoms to Muslims and non-Muslims alike and adopting strategies that have led to gross violations of international human rights standards, all of which negate the spiritual and ethical ideals normally associated with all religions. The agenda thus becomes more political than religious, and religion becomes a tool of political calculation and manipulation.

The sectarian political parties that have tried to adhere to democratic principles and to be more accommodating to the non-Muslim South find themselves in a precarious position between the Islamic revivalists and the secularists. Their political base of support derives predominantly from the religious affiliation and loyalty of the rural masses, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the country. The mere fact that sectarian leaders have succeeded to their positions through heredity makes them part of the traditional system, even though the leaders themselves are among the educated elite. Sectarianism is therefore a blend of tradition and modernity, with a tilt toward conservatism that makes the leaders vulnerable to the forces of change. And yet, Western democracy as a function of numbers and votes cannot ignore their political weight — hence, the fundamentalists' need for the army as an instrument of control and change.

In contrast to the sectarian parties, the National Islamic Front tends to derive its membership from the educated young men and women who are committed to making Islam play a dynamic and dominant role in shaping the modern state and society. Far from seeing leadership in terms of heredity, they emphasize individual merit in which the ability to

operate in the changing modern context is a major factor. Contrary to conventional assumptions, NIF members see their revivalist doctrine as a modernizing concept of Islam, even though, paradoxically they seek to do so by going back to the fundamentals of Islam. Within the modern Islamic context, this gives them an advantage over the sectarian parties in that they project themselves as an Islamic

movement for modern times. But their contest with the sectarian political parties is not limited to the modern context. Potentially, at least, they are also targeting the rural masses that compose the grass-roots Islamic constituency.

Despite the dominance of the sectarian parties in the country, the situation is somewhat fluid in favor of the NIF because the masses of the Sudanese Muslims in the countryside are profoundly religious in an eclectic traditional way that could be swayed in a liberal or fundamentalist direction, depending on the leadership. And as the leaders of the sectarian parties stand equivocating between liberalism and fundamentalism, the NIF and its allies come in full force with a clear and unmitigated vision for Islam that the masses cannot oppose. This acquiescence implies neither a lack of popular understanding nor agreement with the fundamentalist message or methods. Rather it indicates a reluctance to oppose the most vocal advocates of shari'a in the emerging context of the modern nation-state. The September Laws could be attacked and possibly even repudiated as un-Islamic; but the principle of commitment to shari'a advocated by the NIF and the present government is a more difficult position for the Muslims to attack or challenge, except perhaps on the grounds that it is being imposed through military force or that it will alienate the non-Muslim South and threaten national unity. But for a dogmatic Muslim, religion clearly reigns above national unity.

As a result, while there are northerners who would wholeheartedly endorse the secular agenda of the SPLM-SPLA and the principles of equality without religious discrimination, only a negligible and ineffective minority come out openly for the separation of religion and state. Behind closed doors they would entirely agree that secularism is the only way to preserve the unity of the country, but they will also confess that they cannot say that openly, nor can they expect the Sudanese Muslim community to take a position contrary to shari'a. In this sense, the crisis of national identity becomes a crisis of leadership in the pluralistic context.

Seen from the perspective of the non-Muslims in general and the South in particular, however fair, just, and magnanimous the Arab-Islamic framework advanced by the NIF and the dominant political forces in the North, it can never provide for full equality. Advocates of shari'a argue that the non-Muslim minority should accommodate itself to the will of the Muslim majority, whose moral obligation is to guaran-

tee minority rights. The SPLM-SPLA, speaking largely for the disadvantaged non-Arab population, argue that the indigenous Sudanese, including the non-Arab Muslim communities of the North, are an ethnic or racial majority which could be mobilized to counter the majority based on religious identity. They assert that inasmuch as the Muslims are inclined to use the logic of their religious majority these groups could use the logic of their racial or ethnic majority to justify fashioning a Sudanese state on Africanism, even though it would recognize and respect the religious and cultural rights of the Muslims and the Arabs.

Differences within the SPLM-SPLA complicate the situation by creating confusion on the objectives of the struggle. The division first occurred in late August 1991, when Commanders Riek Machar, Lam Akol, and Gordon Kong openly rebelled against Commander-in-Chief John Garang to avert what they feared was their imminent arrest. Then they turned a personal crisis into a political opportunity, arguing that they were motivated by the need to reconsider the objectives of the struggle to favor separatism for the South, to democratize and institutionalize the movement, and to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

These were laudable objectives in the abstract. Most Southerners always knew that the movement's claim to fight for a new united Sudan was mostly a tactical ploy to neutralize any opposition that the call for separation might generate. Although southern aspirations for the liberation of the whole Sudan as an African country grew with the strength of the movement, and John Garang himself appeared to become increasingly persuaded by his own rhetoric, the bottom line for the South remained separation. But most southerners also recognized that separation could not be achieved merely by calling for it. They knew that the surest, though most painful and costly, way would be winning it in the battlefield, as Eritrea did. The proof that the call for separation by the rebel commanders was, at least initially a self-seeking move soon became manifest in their tactical alliance with Khartoum against the mainstream, even though their call for separation was not acceptable to

the government.

Nevertheless, the leaders of the breakaway faction continued to broaden their base of support among the southerners on the basis of their declared principles, and they focused on an unwavering demand for the removal of Garang as the leader of the movement. What ap-

peared initially to be an ineffectual armchair coup grew increasingly into "the creeping revolution," a term by which its perpetrators wanted it to be known. Worse, it deteriorated into bloody and intertribal hostilities, which deepened and widened the divisions among the southerners. For its part the government, keen to seize the opportunity of dividing and weakening the enemy moved in with various incentives, from military supplies and logistical support to financial rewards, for the rebels. As a result, rebellion and factionalism continued to spread. Although the mainstream under the leadership of Garang has remained predominant, this centrifugal process threatens to turn the South into a Somalia-type situation of tribal and clan warfare, making the resolution of the conflict infinitely more difficult.

Differences within the North also add to the complexities. The current government is opposed by nearly all the major political forces, not explicitly because of its Islamic agenda, but because it is a military regime. These opposition forces have joined the SPLM-SPLA to form the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), whose manifest objective is the overthrow of the military regime. For most of those in opposition, especially among the modern forces, rejection of military rule goes hand in hand with an equal rejection of another return to the rule of the sectarian political parties. This leaves a vacuum that tends to promote political apathy among the people. Since the regime and its religiously committed supporters are determined to ensure the regime's security, this apathy tends to diminish the likelihood of a popular uprising such as has forced military regimes out of power in the past.

These internal conflicts or differences within the South and the North interconnect not only to complicate the North-South dichotomy but indeed to make the resolution of the major conflict between the North and the South more difficult. Certainly the northern political forces with which the SPLM-SPLA are now allied in the NDA would not favor a settlement between the movement and the government, since that would deprive them of the only credible military power the opposition has. Nor would the Lam Akol-Riek Machar faction, joined by several others, want a settlement between the mainstream movement and the government since that would deprive these breakaway commanders of their only

value, as allies with the government against Garang.

Government and opposition leaders thus appear preoccupied with tactics and strategies for dividing and weakening the enemy with no

leadership wielding the moral authority to rally the nation behind a common goal or purpose. This not only makes the prospects for peace and unity even more elusive, but also aggravates what is already a calamitous humanitarian tragedy for the civilian population, most of whom are uprooted, displaced inside the country or forced to find refuge in neighboring lands. As if these complications were not enough, the involvement of regional and international actors such as Iraq, Iran, Libya, and Syria, aligning with internal factions, not only deepens the cleavages, but also raises the capacity of the nation for self-destruction and reduces the prospects for a negotiated settlement.

Whatever the dynamics in the power equations, however, it is unlikely that either side can win the war decisively. However much the SPLM-SPLA might be weakened by internal differences, regional changes, and the improved fighting capacity of the government forces, the southern quest for justice and equality is bound to keep the fires of rebellion ablaze for the foreseeable future. Statesmanship and enlightened self-interest should dictate that peaceful resolution of the conflict be recognized as an urgent imperative. For that to be possible, the mind-set of the Sudanese and, in particular, the leadership will have to be radically and fundamentally transformed.

THE RACE FACTOR

One of the major sources of confusion in the Sudanese identity crisis is the manner in which the northern identity has been given a composite character that fuses elements of race, culture, and religion. The way this is done camouflages the racial dimension and covers up racism. The subjective racial dimension of Arabism deepens the cleavage between the North and the South, making it difficult even for the Arabized southern Muslims to bridge. An analytical way of ameliorating the cleavage is to separate race, culture, and religion and then scrutinize the validity of the northern claim to be Arab, both racially and culturally, taking a close look at the version of Islam practiced in the North in that context. Since race seems to be the hidden agenda item behind the overplayed issue of religion, it is essential to scrutinize the identity of the North from that perspective. In the South, as indeed in many African countries, different

religions are practiced in numerous families, but religion does not interfere with the essential family unity,

which is cemented by kinship loyalties. This practice has much in common with the Sufist tradition, which, like African indigenous religions, is both personalized and lineage oriented, with a high level of tolerance for diversities.

The first line of approach then is to tackle the issue of Arabism and Africanism as elements of national identification. The argument is often made in the Sudan, and indeed in Arab circles, that Arabism is not a racial but a cultural concept. This tendency reflects both the difficulties of determining such a nebulous concept as race by objective criteria of blood and the implicit desire to avoid the issue. But it has at its heart the particular circumstances of the Sudan, where visible evidence of those who claim to be genealogically and therefore racially Arab reveals no credible racial basis for the claim. The challenge for the scholar, the intellectual, and the sophisticated politician in the North is how to rationalize a situation where people claim to be racially Arab while their appearance betrays that claim. They find an escape in asserting that what the Sudanese Arab is really claiming is not racial affinity, but cultural affiliation. By doing this, they camouflage a totally unjustified racial identity with cultural garb. The implication is that northerners cannot therefore be racists, even though they might be cultural chauvinists, which is apparently seen as less ominous than racism. This is a clever ploy. It provides an escapist frame of mind for the intellectual and the politician, but it does not address the racial problems of the country. It leaves secure in their beliefs the masses of northern Sudanese who conceive of themselves as both racially and culturally Arab, assume superiority on those grounds, and discriminate against their non-Arab compatriots. It also leaves unscathed the northern leaders, who, having escaped reality through this conceptual ploy, cannot offer leadership with any moral integrity and authority to rid the nation of Arab racism.

In a way then, insisting that Arab identity is culturally and not racially based conceals northern self-identification as racially Arab. Such fictitious self-identification is by no means benign, but indeed provides a basis for racial prejudice and discrimination that have real consequences in the interrelationships among the citizens, though they are often unrecognized

or willfully denied.

Even if the admittedly malignant concept of race were dismissed in favor of the supposedly more benign notion of culture, how does that help a culturally divided country unite? Whether the Sudan is racially

or culturally divided may make some difference on the emotional level, but it still means that there is no common ground. The challenging question is, What unites these people who call themselves Sudanese but are otherwise divided on subjective notions of race, religion, culture, or other factors? An obvious alternative to the perceived dichotomy is to recognize the gap between the claimed racial or cultural basis of identity and the visual evidence to the contrary in order to explode the myth and shed light on those shared factors that do not warrant claims to exaggerated racial or cultural differences on which prejudices are founded.

POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES

What obvious wisdom counsels is not necessarily the course of action that decisionmakers follow. The Sudanese situation is a tragic reflection of this truism. On the one hand, the issues in the conflict have become increasingly clear to all, including the parties themselves. On the other hand, they recognize that the status quo cannot sustain peace and unity. And yet, the positions the parties have adopted paradoxically widen the gap between them, making compromises difficult if not impossible.

The history of South-North relations appears to have convinced the SPLM-SPLA and, indeed, the South that the wielders of power at the center and the northerners in general are not going to heed the message of southern grievances unless and until the evidence is clearly established on the battlefield. Whether this is true or not, the movement and most of the more politicized southern population believe that the North will accept only through military force the need for restructuring the national power process. But to avoid appearing like warmongers and to win sympathy and political support, even from the North itself, they must play up their commitment to a negotiated settlement as a matter of principle.

On the part of the successive governments in Khartoum, the success of the SPLM-SPLA in achieving its declared objectives, whether through military or political means, would undoubtedly threaten the dominance of the center and the Arab Muslim North. Naturally except for rare

statesmanship, with which the Sudan has so far not been blessed, it is difficult for any leader in Khartoum to make such a major concession. On the other hand, compromising from a strong military

and political vantage point would mean a less radical change that the system could absorb without being self-destructive. The intensification of the military front is therefore perceived as a necessary aspect of negotiation. Likewise, raising the banner of peace can be a tactic designed to foster the appearance of flexibility and compromise and to fend off criticisms of intransigence. Such is the case with both the government and the SPLM-SPLA.

Comparable factors are at work with respect to unity and separation. With the prolongation and intensification of the conflict, the forces of unity and separatism have both been strengthened. Separatism has a deeply rooted sympathy, if not open support, in southern circles. Except for the recent splinter group of Lam Akol, Riek Machar, and other dissidents who are openly calling for separation, the leadership of the SPLM-SPLA has discreetly but consistently stood for the unity of the country. Nevertheless, the strategy of the movement does not preclude separation. Indeed, the SPLM-SPLA leadership concedes that southerners would prefer separation if it were achievable. But in the view of the mainstream leadership, fighting for equality within unity was a means of winning sympathy and support, not only nationally, but also regionally and internationally. Separation could then be achieved under the umbrella of the struggle for justice. Besides, the liberation of the whole country, if achievable, would be encompassing and would imply the liberation of the South. Even at the peak of the unionist outlook, John Garang, the SPLM-SPLA leader, repeatedly told his fighting men that both those fighting to liberate the South and those fighting for the liberation of the whole country had a common cause and could join hands and fight together until War Zone One — the South — was liberated. At that point, those content with the liberation of the South could remain behind while those committed to the liberation of the whole country could continue the struggle. He also admitted that even the leaders committed to the liberation of the whole country could not proceed northward if they had no following.

All this means that the movement's policy of unity and the liberation of the whole country was a clever scheme dictated by regional and

international considerations. But clever as it was, the strategy has never been understood; if it were understood, it would lose its credibility. Indeed, unity has always been a precarious approach, since it was never easy to believe, coming from the lips of southerners, and if it were explained, it could be exposed and discredited.

Recent developments in the world make it easier for the South to be

more explicit about the objectives of its struggle. But even now, the old considerations remain valid. Separatism is still not a notion African leaders embrace without trepidation. Besides, the song of unity in a new Sudan has been sung long enough for many, especially in the leadership, to enjoy the tune. At the same time., however, it is becoming increasingly clear, even to the leadership of the movement, that the country far from making headway in that direction, is indeed regressing. Even if the creation of the new Sudan were possible in the long run, many observers, including black Africans, are beginning to wonder whether the massive loss of human lives, destruction of property and retardation of development are worth that long-term vision. Since southerners have always understood the position of the movement as a pragmatic strategy to maximize support for the struggle rather than as an unqualified commitment to unity this changing perspective is welcome to them. Recent adjustments in the position of the movement, which now considers confederation and even self-determination as alternatives to a united, democratic, secular Sudan, underscore the point. The two SPLM-SPLA factions came together at Abuja in May 1992 behind the alternative of self-determination, which the Garang mainstream had adopted in its September 1991 meeting of the high command. But the mainstream still views the increasing support for separation in international circles as merely rhetorical. There is a deep fear among the leaders that once southerners call for separation, they will lose allies in the struggle and find no genuine backing for their call in the international community.

The Sudanese cannot, however, continue for long to evade the critical issues with coded messages that turn negotiations into a game of wits with hidden agendas. It is time the parties, and indeed the people of the Sudan, confronted the critical choices that must be made. The North and the South have held one another down for far too long. It is time to disentangle, rise, and move on with the tasks of reconstruction, development, and nation building.

THE CRITICAL OPTIONS

The Sudanese have a limited number of options from which to choose among the discernible positions of the parties. One is to redefine the

national identity so as to be genuinely uniting and to foster full equal-

ity of opportunity in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of their country; another is to create a framework that would reconcile the idealistic aspirations for unity and the realities of diversity; and a third is to recognize that obstacles to national unity are perhaps insurmountable and that partition might permit both sides to move on with the more positive tasks of reconstruction and development on the bases of their own self-perceptions and aspirations.²

The divisive attitude on racial identity does not rest on the scientific or objective question of whether or not there is an Arab racial component in the northerner and in what proportions, but on deeply entrenched, divisive self-perceptions that are false and distorted. Racial identification in the Sudan is a function of the heart and the mind, not of objective facts. To fight racism in all its forms, it is essential to rid people of loaded, yet empty racial assumptions and to foster a sense of Sudanese identity by revealing its objective bases rather than by merely advocating the objective. The Sudanese need to see themselves first and foremost as Sudanese rather than as Arabs, Africans, Muslims, Christians, or adherents of particular belief systems. They also need to give substantive content to what it means to be Sudanese. In this connection, it is primarily the northerners who will require significant reorientation, for they are the ones who embody the unifying and the divisive elements of identity — African or Arab — but deny the one in exclusive preference for the other. It is also the North that controls the trump card of state power with the greatest potential for shaping conditions.

What does it mean to be Sudanese? Removing external symbols of identity should reveal the true cultural values and orientations of the country showing how they can interact in an equitable, integrating process of nation building. This should mean removing religion from public life, adopting English and Arabic as working languages, and encouraging the major indigenous languages in primary education and for local, functional purposes. Such a process of self-discovery should have far-reaching policy implications for education, cultural programs, the mass media, general enlightenment, and foreign relations.

These suggestions are not entirely new, though they are an ambitious extension of something that was tried and worked only to a degree and for a limited period. The framework created by the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement, while it subordinated the South in a manner that

will not again be acceptable as a viable solution, gave the country a sense of nationhood and of collective purpose. The broadening of participation to include all regions and sectors brought together people from the South, the West, the East, and the North, many of whom looked even more negroid than the Nilotics and were as poor in Arabic as the southerners are. Suddenly the picture of the clear dichotomy between the Arab North and the African South became much more blurred; what emerged was the true face of the Sudan in all its complexity one that only a few Sudanese, including leaders in Khartoum, had seen or recognized throughout the history of independence. It made the Sudanese realize for the first time their country's long-projected role as a microcosm of Africa and the link between the continent and the Middle East.

These elements of Sudanese identity and the way they shaped domestic and foreign policies were perhaps most succinctly articulated in the study prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and offered to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in celebration of its tenth anniversary in 1973. They also shaped the policy statement of President Nimeiri on the Sudan's support for the Camp David accords as an extension of the principles that had guided domestic policies of negotiated settlement and national reconciliation. And yet, this process of self-discovery and restructuring of national self-perception was a factor that threatened the northern elite and propelled them to undermine the Addis Ababa Agreement and eventually forced Nimeiri to undo what was in effect the most important accomplishment of his leadership. Nevertheless, although Nimeiri dismantled the framework he had built, the experience offers a precedent and a model that could be improved upon to make the postulated objective a goal that is not only achievable, but was at one time actually achieved to a significant degree. Its failure, however, makes it very difficult if not impossible to envisage an arrangement within the framework of unity that will become acceptable to the South as a reliable guarantee of peace and security. That remote possibility might, however, challenge the leadership to be more creative in the search for solutions.

For any solution to bring enduring peace, unity and stability to the country it must be sensitive to horizontal relationships among the various

communities on which the problems of identity have an effect and vertical linkages from the local to the national. This perspective is substantiated by the case of Abyei, whose omission from the Addis Ababa

Agreement of 1972 contributed directly to the resumption of hostilities in 1983. Abyei provides a point of close contact and interaction between northerners and southerners and has been described as a microcosm of the Sudan in much the same way the Sudan has been described as a microcosm of Africa. Any future solution between the North and the South cannot afford to overlook the thorny and cancerous situation of the Ngok Dinka of Abyei in Southern Kordofan, who, for generations, were a North-South bridge, but recently have been the victims of both conflict and reconciliation in North-South relations. In consequence, they have been an aggravating factor, if not the immediate cause, in the resumption of the civil war.

Once the common domestic ground has been prepared and cultivated, and the national sense of identity has grown to fruition, the Sudanese could move securely to reach out to the wider world of nations and peoples. In the past, these external connections favored a one-sided view of Sudanese identity — the Arab element. Africa did not offer a comparable contribution that would balance that of the Arabs. The moderating potential of the South in foreign relations can be illustrated by the contrasting responses of the Sudan to two developments in the Middle East: the Six-Day War, when the Sudan adopted the hard line of the Arab countries; and the Camp David accords, which the Sudan supported by extending the domestic principles of the peaceful resolution of conflicts behind the Addis Ababa Agreement, which also made southern participation in the formulation of foreign policy possible. But, again, with the abrogation of the Addis Ababa Agreement, the Arab profile in the Sudan returned to the forefront, while the African dimension receded.

The picture is now changing somewhat, as Africa is becoming concerned about the plight of the Sudanese, but this is more a conflictual reaction to the effect of Arabism and Islam. Many Sudanese openly admit that the higher profile given to the Arab identity has been influenced by Sudan's need for Arab financial support, which was enhanced by a combination of the Arab petrodollar boom of the 1970s and the increasing poverty of the Sudan and of Africa. But the country is rich in resources. It has abundant

agricultural land and water, and there are significant oil and mineral reserves. With peace, stability, and prudent policies, it should be able to sustain its domestically rooted identity with pride.

Of course, remolding identity to serve the cause of peace and unity

is a process that, while it can be immediately generated, will require a long-term approach. This can be pursued through a variety of means. War itself is one means, as it forces both sides to reflect deeply on the issues. Leadership is certainly crucial in demonstrating the symbols or models of the new identity and explaining them to the people. The constitutional framework and the established institutions of shaping and sharing power, wealth, and other resources equitably are also significant factors.

Whatever constitutional labels are used in describing an appropriate framework, what is critical to bear in mind is that southern fears of Arab domination can only be resolved by a highly decentralized system of government. Also, adequate security arrangements at the regional level must be agreed to, and the central government should be equitably shared among the regions or the states. In this connection, the southern contribution to such an arrangement will have to be more substantive and substantial than the case that it has made in the past for coexistence within a unified Sudan. Southerners have generally tended to perceive themselves in negative terms as non-Arab and non-Muslim. The indigenous cultures of the South need to articulate and develop identities that will evolve in their own regional contexts and influence the national framework.

Desirable as is the option of restructuring national identity, telling the northerners that they are not what they claim to be and that they must adjust their self-perception in the interest of national unity may not be palatable. Indeed, while some are likely to accept the argument with good grace, many find it insulting and unacceptable. Since no leader or political organization is in sight that could persuade the country to move in that direction, it is probably more practical to recognize that the history of relations and the tracks of identity formation would not allow for such a restructuring of the national character despite the lofty goal of unity encompassing diversity. An alternative solution in the light of that realization would be a looser arrangement along the lines of a confederal constitutional system. Even with this arrangement, however, it seems unlikely that a consensus will develop. In fact, the SPLM-SPLA has

recently proposed a confederal alternative along similar lines, and the official reaction of the regime has been outright rejection. Nevertheless, the proposal was the official position of the movement during the 1993 talks at Abuja II, which ended in an impasse.

Beyond such a loose concept of unity, only partition remains an option. So far, northern political forces and, until recently the mainstream SPLM-SPLA have disavowed separation. While unity remains an abstract ideal, a dispassionate evaluation of the situation leads to the inevitable conclusion that the prospects for a united country do not appear promising in the light of historical experiences. Partition, then, may be the most feasible and least destructive option, barring a dramatic and unexpected development in the political equations in the North.

Partition in itself, however, will not necessarily resolve conflicts within the North and the South. Indeed, removing the threat from the outside may well aggravate internal conflicts. But that is a challenge to be confronted within that framework and through arrangements appropriate to the level and the context. A North and a South in conflict within themselves are not likely to be as acutely divided as the North and the South have been in the national context. In the degree to which they achieve internal cohesiveness or are divided, they would reflect the realities of many African or Arab countries.

The process of choosing among these options itself poses a challenging problem. Since the political stakes are very high, neither the government nor the leaders of either the North or the South can assume such a responsibility with impunity. The solution would be to let the people themselves decide. This can be done through a two-tier process conducted separately in the North and the South. The questions for northerners would be whether or not and on what basis they would want the North and the South to be affiliated, through a federal or a confederal arrangement and what the role of religion in the state should be. The vote of the South would then be a response to the northern vote. Whether the North rejects or endorses an Islamic state, the decision for southerners would be whether to remain united with the North and under which of the two alternative frameworks, federalism or confederalism, with or without separation of religion and the state, or whether they would prefer the South to be fully independent of the North. These two referendums should be internationally supervised with monitors from the OAU, the United Nations, neighboring African and Arab countries, and other

concerned states inside or outside the region.

Improbable as it may be, one cannot rule out the possibility that seeing these options and their repercussions may well challenge the

Sudanese to be far more creative and constructive in their search for just and lasting solutions to the national question of unity. In any case, a referendum would make the choice theirs, and they would not have individual leaders to blame.

PROGRAM OF ACTION

In view of the devastation and the magnitude of human suffering that the war has inflicted on the country and, in particular, the people of the most affected areas, it is urgent to translate the principles outlined above into a practical program of action for peace that could guide the parties and mediators at all levels, national, regional, and international.³

The starting point to any promising initiative for peace is to recognize that two parallel visions have emerged in the North and the South as a result of historical evolution. These visions are not easily reconcilable and therefore pose a serious challenge to the survival of the nation unless the leaders rise above factionalism. Within this broad picture, there are variations and levels of conflict — tribal, regional, and ideological — that will also require attention. But the most critical dimension is the North-South conflict. The crystallization of the divisive issues and the rigidity of the positions in conflict indicate that overcoming the obstacles to peace will be extremely difficult and will require major compromises if the conflict is to be resolved within the framework of national unity.

The conflicting parties must recognize that they each represent legitimate concerns that are broadly shared within their identity groups, despite internal differences on matters of detail, tactics, or strategy. They must resolve to end the conflict by accommodating these concerns, even if this means dividing the country. While the details will need to be negotiated at a constitutional conference, the urgency of the present situation dictates that the immediate humanitarian needs of the people and, in particular, of the war-stricken regions, be addressed through interim emergency arrangements aimed at ending the hostilities as soon as possible. Such arrangements should at least help reduce the level of violence, allow people to resume normal life, facilitate the delivery of urgently needed relief, help the internally displaced southern population to return home,

and initiate programs for rehabilita-

tion, reconstruction, and development. Cross-border delivery of relief as well as trade and access to international cooperation would be necessary ingredients in the equation. These arrangements could also have the effect of fostering confidence between the principal parties in the conflict.

The suggested arrangements would imply an administrative structure or framework preferably to be agreed upon by the parties or accepted on a de facto basis. This would mean a form of cease-fire, some adjustment of the troops' location, including the possibility of a withdrawal of the army from the South, and the establishment of a transitional administration of southern unity on terms and principles agreeable to both sides and subject to any other solutions that may later be decided upon. These arrangements should not prejudge the issue of unity or separation, since the final decision would be made by the people of both the North and the South through the suggested internationally supervised referendums.

These arrangements may require the establishment of a joint commission involving representatives from both sides, with the participation of the OAU and the United Nations, to oversee the implementation of the interim agreement, to assist in confidence building, and to ensure that the referendums are conducted in an atmosphere of security and full freedom of choice. All this has to be in the context of a firm and internationally sanctioned commitment to resolving the conflict, whatever the outcome.

While the resolution of the North-South conflict cannot await the resolution of all the problems within the North and the South, no solution could endure without the acceptance of the major political forces and the Sudanese people. It now seems clear that after decades of a debilitating civil war, the Sudanese are ready and eager for a solution. It is quite likely, indeed probable, that the idea of referendums in both the North and the South and the proposed interim arrangements would be, in due course, acceptable to the political parties and other opposition groups, provided their positions or perspectives are given due recognition and provided they are allowed to campaign fully in the referendum.

Recognizing the competing positions and perspectives would require an

agreement on the broad principles for governing the country, divided or united, and developing an enduring democratic system. Since the religious agenda of the government is not too different from

that of the sectarian political parties, except for their rivalry over power, it should be possible for them to accommodate each other, once the southern problem has been removed from the arena, especially as neither of them can enjoy the undivided support of the public without the other. It may indeed be desirable to bring these parties together with the government as a first step in the negotiating process. The same is also true of the different factions within the SPLM-SPLA. These measures would reduce the parties to two clusters, which would be more manageable. A climate of genuine, statesmanlike effort to end the conflict and move the country forward on the path of development and nation building could be generated to foster a process of reconciliation among all the factions in both the North and the South, whatever the outcome of the planned referendums.

The principles of such reconciliation would be along the broad outlines of stopping the fighting, delineating the borders of effective control, moving on with the essentials of life, agreeing on the principles of governance, and preparing the people to make a genuinely free choice. These measures could be implemented over time, allowing the gradual evolution of a functional framework for a process that could progressively address impending problems within a specified period of time. Mechanisms could be established for continuing discussions on the constitutional and legal arrangements for the solution to those problems along the lines of the options presented above, ranging from unity on the basis of a new national identity to outright partition.

The idea of partition, which has always been viewed as taboo, can no longer be dismissed or discussed lightly. Chronic conflict between the two parts of the country has not only held both from moving forward with development and nation building, but has devastated the Sudan, causing an intolerable loss of human life, destruction of the resource-base of the rural population, and retardation of economic and social development. The situation has become a humanitarian tragedy of monumental magnitude. It is imperative that this tragedy be halted, if need be through partition, but as an expression of the will of the people, freely exercised. Perhaps in due course, need might induce the two parts to come back

together on the bases of mutual respect and a cooperative pursuit of common goals.

The bitter history of broken promises and dishonored agreements and the elusiveness of peace suggest that no option can be ruled out as an item for discussion. Undoubtedly unity is a laudable goal, but

the best guarantee for unity is for the leadership, especially at the national level, to rise above factionalism and to offer the entire nation a vision that would inspire a cross-sectional majority of the Sudanese people, irrespective of race, ethnicity, region, or religion, to identify with the nation and to stand together in collective pursuit of their common destiny. That can be determined by an informed and enlightened vote through the suggested referendums in the North and the South. Only through mutual recognition, respect, and harmonious interaction among African and Arab populations throughout the country can the Sudan achieve and ensure a just and lasting peace and live up to its role as a true microcosm of Africa and a dynamic link between the continent and the Middle East. Tragically this has remained a mirage since independence.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Professor Muddathir' Abd Al-Rahim in a keynote address to the Juba Conference on the Role of the South in the Sudanese Nationalist Movement, February 26–28, 1985.

2. Hisham M. Amin, “Fatal Nationalism: The Problem of Reinvention of Sudan,” research project proposal, Yale University, 1993, p. 8.

CHAPTER 1

1. John Obert Voll, “Northern Muslim Perspectives,” in John V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1990), p. 389.

2. In the Sudan, unlike other African countries with a Muslim population, Islam is closely associated with the Arabic language, culture, and race, perhaps because of the historical association with the Arab world and in particular with Egypt. For the contrasting models of Islam in sub-Saharan and northern Africa, see Omari H. Kokole, “The Islamic Factor in African-Arab Relations,” in *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 6 (July 1984), pp. 687–702. According to the author, while African countries south of the Sahara underwent Islamization, North Africa experienced two processes: Islamization and Arabization. “With time the North Africans came to see themselves as ‘Arabs.’ ” p. 688.

3. Yusuf Fadl Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan* (Edinburgh University Press, 1967), p. 90. The current tendency however, is to dispute the matrilineal theory and to see the process more in terms of the dominance of the Arabs in the power process with a degree of magnanimity and a relatively harmonious interaction that favored the Arab-Islamic identity as a symbol of upward mobility. See, for instance, Lloyd A. Binagi, “The Genesis of the Modern Sudan: An Interpretative Study of the Rise of

Afro-Arab Hegemony in the Nile Valley, A. D. 1260–1826;” Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1981. Abdullahi A. Ibrahim addresses this very point: “Scholars adhering to the model have not taken into account the parameters of power attending the Arab/African encounter in the Sudan” “The Northern Sudanese: An Anthropology of Hybridity,” unpublished postdoctorate fellowship proposal, Carter G. Woodson Institute for Afro-American and African Studies, University of Virginia, December 1991, p. 3. Ibrahim also reviews the literature of the new thinking on the issue of the assumed matrilineality of the system that prevailed at that time.

4. For a background on the conflict and a history of the first phase of the war, see Muhammad Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict*

(London: C. Hurst and Company, 1968, republished by Khartoum University Press, 1979). See also Dunstan M. Wai, ed., *The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), and *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York and London: Africana Publishing Company, 1981). For a southern point of view, see Joseph Oduho and William Deng, *The Problem of the Southern Sudan* (Oxford University Press, 1963); and Oliver Albino, *The Sudan: A Southern Viewpoint* (Oxford University Press, 1970). The main problem that confronted the Sudanese on independence was the role of religion in the affairs of the state. In 1956, Hasan Muddathir, the grand qadi of the Sudan — the head of the Muslim division of the legal system — in his memorandum to the constituent assembly, argued that, “In an Islamic country like the Sudan, the social organization of which has been built upon Arab customs and Islamic ways and of which the majority are Moslems, it is essential that the general principles of the Constitution of such a country should be derived from the principles of Islam; and, consequently, the laws governing its people should be enacted from the principles of an Islamic Constitution and in accordance with Islamic ideals out of which such a community has been shaped.” “A Memorandum for the Enactment of a Sudan Constitution Derived from the Principles of Islam,” as quoted in Francis M. Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 22. See also Akolda M. Tier, “Freedom of Religion under the Sudan Constitution and Laws,” *Journal of African Law*, vol. 26 (Autumn 1982), pp. 133–51.

5. For a detailed account of the Addis Ababa Agreement, see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Peace and Unity in the Sudan: An African Achievement* (Khartoum University Press, 1973); Muhammad Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: From Conflict to Peace* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 1975). For the negotiations that led to the agreement, see Dunstan M. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York, London: Africana Publishing Company, 1981); Hizkias Assefa, *Mediation of Civil Wars: Approaches and Strategies — The Sudan Conflict* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987); and Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many*

Agreements Dishonoured (Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990).

6. For an in-depth treatment of this aspect, see Larry Minear and others, *Humanitarianism under Siege: A Critical Review of Operation Lifeline Sudan* (Trenton, N.J.: Red Sea Press, 1991); and Francis M. Deng and Larry Minear, *The Challenges of Famine Relief. Emergency Operations in the Sudan* (Brookings, 1992). See also Bruce Van Voorhis, "Food as a Weapon for Peace: Operation Lifeline Sudan," *Africa Today*, vol. 36 (nos. 3 and 4, 1989), pp. 29–42.

7. In August 1991, a faction of the SPLM-SPLA under the leadership of commanders Dr. Riek Machar, Dr. Lam Akol, and Gordon Kong rebelled against the leadership of Dr. John Garang, calling for democracy, human rights, and separation for the South. Paradoxically, their rebellion has led to greater cooperation between them and the regime in Khartoum in a tactical short-term alliance against the mainstream SPLM-SPLA.

8. For the reaction of the SPLM-SPLA, see John Garang de Mabior, "Statement to the Sudanese People on the Current Situation in the Sudan," General Headquarters, SPLM-SPLA, August 10, 1989.

9. Between September 9 and October 21, 1989, the government convened a National Dialogue Conference on Peace Issues, whose principal recommendation for solving the country's problems of regional, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity was a federal constitution. The government endorsed the rec-

ommendations of the conference and the SPLM-SPLA acknowledged them, along with recommendations from other sources, as useful bases for constitutional talks. For the official report on the conference, see Steering Committee for National Dialogue on Peace Issues, Final Report and Recommendations, (Khartoum 1989), the so-called Red Book.

10. K. D. D. Henderson, Sudan Republic (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), p. 75.

11. See J. Spencer Trimingham, The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan (Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 25–26.

12. See Gabriel Warburg, Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society: The Case of Sudan (London: Frank Cass, 1978), p. 110. See also the Report of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Sudan, September–November, 1971, p. 20, which emphasizes youth and students as the most significant element of the party's main activities. Peter Woodward argues that in the 1960s the “Muslim Brotherhood was largely associated with the educated elite, and has always had particular support in schools and colleges” “Islam and Politics,” in Muddathir' Abd al-Rahim and others, eds., Sudan since Independence (Aldesshor, UK: Gowes, 1986), p. 3.

13. Tim Niblock, Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics, 1898–1985 (State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 161–62.

14. For studies of these two movements, see Muhammad Nuri El-Amin, The Emergence and Development of the Leftist Movement in the Sudan during the 1930S and 1940s (Khartoum University Press, 1984); and Hassan Mekki Muhammad Ahmed, Harakat El Ikhwan El Muslimeen Fil-Sudan 1944–1969 (Khartoum University Press, 1982).

15. During the period of parliamentary democracy following the overthrow of Jaafar Nimeiri, Sadiq al-Mahdi alternately entered into coalition with the DUP and the NIF separately and together in an effort to forge the Islamic agenda. But all these efforts proved to be unsustainable as the

Islamic agenda. But all these efforts proved to be unsustainable, as the parties were more divided by ambitions over power than they were united in the faith.

16. Constance S. Gresham Berkeley, "The Roots of Consciousness Molding the Art of El Tayeb Salih: A Contemporary Sudanese Writer," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University 1979, p. xxviii.

17. Ahmad A. Nasr, "A Search for Identity: Three Trends in Sudanese Folkloristics," in Ahmad Abd-Al-Rahim Nasr, ed., *Folklore and Development in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1981), p. 21.

18. Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 1990), p. 4.

19. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 4.

20. Ibid. See also Mansour Khalid, *John Garang Speaks* (London: KPI Ltd., 1987), pp. 128–29.

21. Ibid. Mansour Khalid, "External Factors in the Sudanese Conflict," in Francis Deng and Prosser Gifford, eds., *The Search for Peace and Unity in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: The Wilson Center Press, 1987), p. 110.

22. M. W. Daly "Islam, Secularism, and Ethnic Identity in the Sudan," in Gustavo Benavides and M. W. Daly, eds., *Religion and Political Power* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 83.

23. Robert O. Collins, "In Search of the Sudanese," keynote speech delivered at the annual banquet of the Sudan Studies Association of the United States (Williamsburg, Virginia, April 15, 1988), pp. 1–2; published in the *Sudan Times*, vol. 3, no. 520, May 25, 1988, p. 4.

24. Bashir called the murder of William Deng "the most tragic event," which

“represented a great set-back in North-South relations.” *The Southern Sudan: From Conflict to Peace*, p. 38.

25. Muhammad Omar Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (Barnes & Noble, 1974), p. 2.

26. Sudan Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in the Southern Sudan during August 1955* (Khartoum: McCorquedale, 1956), p. 81.

27. In a 1973 publication, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan*, I observed: “Regional self-rule is the best solution the President could have adopted, but it should be viewed as a giant step toward an ultimate solution.... It is hard to expect that the Southern Sudanese will be content with regional participation only and not be concerned with major national and international issues affecting Sudan's identity.... Although ... cultural dualism has always been seen as a potential merit in practice, it has been fraught with problems.... To realize its potential Sudanese will have to evolve an embracing and dynamic identity enriched, rather than threatened, by its diverse contents.” (Khartoum University Press, 1973), pp. 7–8. See also Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1990), pp. 142–46, where a similar point is made.

28. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, “Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa,” in *African Affairs* (Journal of the Royal African Society), vol. 89 (July 1990), p. 371.

29. El-Affendi, “Discovering the South,” p. 371.

30. Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

1. Lloyd A. Binagi, “The Genesis of the Modern Sudan: An Interpretive Study of the Rise of Afro-Arab Hegemony in the Nile Valley, A. D. 1260–1826 ” Ph D dissertation Temple University 1981 pp 3–4

1929, Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1981, pp. 3–4.

2. Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 1990), p. 24.

3. The first Sudanese kingdom in ancient times was that of Napata (725 B. C. to 350 A.D.). The first of the Cushite kings, Kashuta, extended his rule over upper Egypt, and his son, Piankhy, conquered the whole of Egypt. Under his rule, Egypt is said to have recovered from decadence and prospered. “It has even been suggested that the period of Sudanese domination in Egypt was one of the very few instances in the history of ancient imperialism where the native institutions and the spiritual well-being of a conquered people are known to have prospered and progressed rather than withered and declined under the rule of masters.” Muhammad Omar Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (Barnes & Noble, 1974), pp. 2–3.

4. Yusuf Fadl Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan: From the Seventh to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Edinburgh University Press, 1967), p. 10. Quoted in Francis M. Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 12.

5. Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan*, p. 3.

6. Harold A. McMichael, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan* (Barnes & Noble, 1967), p. 13.

7. Abd el-Fatah Ibrahim el-Sayed Baddour in his *Sudanese-Egyptian Relations*

(The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 17, points out that the Nubians "made several raids against Egypt and laid waste the nearer part of Upper Egypt." Abd Allah Ibn Saad is said to have "bombarded Dongola (the capital of Lower Nubia) with catapults, and laid siege to the town."

8. For the texts of the agreements, see Baddour, *Sudanese-Egyptian Relations*, pp. 17–20; and Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan*, pp. 22–24.

9. *Ibid.*

10. The Muslims sometimes even showed flexibility in their enforcement of the agreement. For instance, during the Caliphate of Al-Mahdi (775–85) the Nubians complained of sending the baqt (tribute) regularly as they had to collect it from slaves captured from the Negroes further South. If they did not capture Negroes, they had to send their own children. To lighten the burden on them, Al-Mahdi told them to pay the baqt once every three years. *Ibid.*

11. According to Omari H. Kokole, "The role of trade in the fortunes of Islam must of course be tied to the biography of the Prophet of Islam himself. Muhammad is perhaps the only founder of a major religion who was once a man of commerce.... The Qur'an itself assures Muslims that it is not reprehensible to seek livelihood in trade...." "The Islamic Factor in African-Arab Relations" *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3 (July 1984), p. 692.

12. Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan*, p. 18. See also "The Penetration of Islam in the Eastern Sudan," *Sudan Notes and Records* [hereafter SNR], vol. 44 (1963), pp. 1–8, in which Hasan also states that "the Muslim Governors of Egypt did not seek to spread Islam with missionary zeal into Nubia and the Eastern Sudan. p. 2.

13. Binagi, "The Genesis of the Modern Sudan," p. 15.

14. In his article "The Hadendowa," SNR, vol. 20, no. 2 (1937), pp. 147–208, T. R. H. Owen observes a practice whereby the Hadendowa try to

trace their ancestry to Arabia even if artificially. "An arabicized Hamitic tribe needs its sheriffi ancestor as much as a soap or tinnert lobster king needs his Norman blood. The origin of the Hadendowa, therefore, was on this wise." p. 184. In "The Rubatab," SNR, vol. 29, no. 1 (1936), pp. 162–67, F. C. S. Lorimer also observes that the Rubatab "claim to be pure Abbassiun descended directly from Al Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet, and finding their race factor in the Beni Abbas branch of the Koraysh, the Prophet's own tribe,...." p. 162. However, this claim to Abbassid ancestry is denied by McMichael in *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*. For various genealogies claiming Arab descent from Arabia see also Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan* chap. 5.

15. This point is invariably made by all studies on Northern Sudanese tribes, some of which have already been cited. For another example see G. E. R. Sandars, "The Amarar," SNR, vol. 18, no. 2 (1935), pp. 195–219. Sandars writes: "Like most Bega tribes, the Amarar have made a deliberate effort to forget their history to the time when they became Islarnized. But although they have introduced a genealogy which they can trace back to the purest Arab blood they admit to being half-indigenous Bega: they have, however, by now eliminated all memory of their pre-Islamic history." p. 198. Their eponymous ancestor is allegedly "a man, an Arab of Kawahla stock, who came over and married one of the local women...." Ibid.

16. For Sufi orders in the Sudan, see Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics, 1898–1985* (State University of New York Press, 1987).

17. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 29.

18. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 7.
19. Muhammad Ibrahim el Shoush, "Some Background Notes on Modern Sudanese Poetry," *SNR*, vol. 14 (1963), pp. 21–42.
20. K. D. D. Henderson, *Sudan Republic* (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), p. 23.
21. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 27. Bashir noted:
"Arabization was accompanied by a process of Islamization and groups of religious teachers — ulemas — probably entered the Sudan with Arab tribes. With the rise of an Islamized dynasty and the consolidation of Muslim authority, the stage was set for the further advance of Islam and the infiltration of Muslim religious leaders" *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 5.
22. A. J. Arkell, "The History of Darfur 1200–1700 A.D.," *SNR*, vol. 32, parts 1 and 2 (1951), pp. 37–70, 207–08, and vol. 33, parts 1 and 2, pp. 129–55 and pp. 244–75, describes archeological investigations in Darfur that have shed some light on its history. He points out that Darfur has deep roots with West African kingdoms and accepted nominal Islam for prestige. Islam came to Darfur from the West or North Africa rather than Egypt and the East. See also G. D. Lampen, "History of Darfur," *SNR*, vol. 31, no. 2 (1950), pp. 177–209.
23. R. C. Stevenson, "Some Aspects of Islam in the Nuba Mountains," *SNR*, vol. 44 (1963), pp. 9–20. "The penetration of Islam into the life of the Nubas follows the usual well-known processes of infiltration and syncretism which have been described for many tribes. Cultural elements became partially Islarnized, or are remodelled or continue as before with an Islamic cachet." p. 19.
24. See McMichael, *A History of the Arabs in the Sudan*, p. 35.
25. The same process seems to have taken place throughout Africa. Harry Heintzen, "The Role of Islam in the Era of Nationalism," in William

H. Lewis, ed., *New Forces in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962), p. 42. As to the situation in East Africa, see J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 39, 61–63, 74, 163–64. See also J. N. D. Anderson, “Tropical Africa Infiltration and Expanding Horizons,” in Gustave E. Von Grunebaum, ed., *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization* (University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 263.

26. C. D. Farran, *Matrimonial Laws of the Sudan* (London: Butterworths, 1963), pp. 227–29. See also J. S. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan* (Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 34–36.

27. Anderson, “Tropical Africa,” p. 265. See also Heintzen, “The Role of Islam in the Era of Nationalism,” p. 421.

28. Jack Mendelsohn, *God, Allah, and Ju Ju: Religion in Africa Today* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), p. 102. The festivities of the Muwliid, the Prophet's birthday, and the Madaih El Nabawiya, chanted poetry in praise of the Prophet, are pertinent examples.

29. J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Christian Church in Post-War Sudan* (World Dominion Press, 1949), p. 23. Trimingham also observed: “Islam is syncretistic, welded into one unified system, the original prophetic element giving validity and solidarity to the popular religion of the East and Africa which it has absorbed. Islam as a spiritual agency is superficial, and yet membership of the system has the power to call forth a feeling of religious superiority, blind devotion and intolerant fanaticism in adherents who know nothing of its sanctions and never observe its precepts.” *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, p. 44.

30. Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London: Frederick Muller, 1956), p. 95. As John V. Taylor put it, “No distinction can be made

between sacred and secular, between natural and supernatural, for Nature, Man and the Unseen are inseparably involved in one another in a total community." *The Primal Vision: Christian Presence amid African Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 72.

31. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, p. 25.

32. By Sandra Hale, "The Changing Ethnic Identity of Nubians in an Urban Milieu, Khartoum, Sudan," Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1979, p. 106.

33. Richard Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan, 1820–1881* (Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 13.

34. Robert O. Collins, *The Southern Sudan, 1883–1898: A Struggle for Control* (Yale University Press, 1962), p. 12.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

36. Farran, *Matrimonial Laws of the Sudan*, p. 14.

37. Anderson, *Tropical Africa*, p. 153. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 25, n. 36.

38. Collins, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 13.

39. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, pp. 29–30.

40. This point is substantiated by Richard Gray in *A History of the Southern Sudan, 1838–1889* (Oxford University Press, 1961).

41. Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan*, p. 102.

42. See E. R. Wingate, *Mahdism and the Egyptian Sudan* (Macmillan, 1891); P M. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan, 1881–1898: A Study of its Origins, Development and Overthrow* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958); and A. B. Theobald, *The Mahdiya: A History of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1881–1899* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951).

43. Ibid. Bashir has observed, "Devotion to the Mahdi dissolved all tribal and religious allegiances: The people to whom he most appealed were the oppressed who were longing for a deliverer. By following the faith of traditional Sudanese sufis by his initiation into the Sammariya order he became a familiar figure to the illiterate and poor ... he preached renunciation of all earthly vanities." *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 16.

44. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 34.

45. Holt, *The Mahdist State in the Sudan*.

46. Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan: A Study in Constitutional and Political Development 1899–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 89.

47. Rudolf C. Slatin Pasha, C. B., *Fire and Sword in the Sudan: A Personal Narrative of Fighting and Serving the Dervishes 1879–1895*, trans. E R. Wingate (London: Edward Arnold, 1897), pp. 272, 274.

48. For a discussion of the reliability of the estimates, see M. W. Daly, *Empire on the Nile: The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1898–1934* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 18.

49. Francis Mading Deng and M. W. Daly, *Bonds of Silk: The Human Factor in the British Administration of the Sudan* (Michigan State University Press, 1989), p. 69.

50. See G. N. Sanderson, *England, Europe and the Upper Nile, 1882–1899* (Edinburgh University Press, 1965); Robert O. Collins, *King Leopold, England, and the Upper Nile 1899–1909* (Yale University Press, 1968); J. A. S. Grenville, *Lord Salisbury and Foreign Policy: The Close of the Nineteenth Century* (London: Athens Press, 1964); 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 24; A. B. Theobald, *The Mahdiya*; Mekki Shibeika, *The Independent Sudan* (London:

Paterson, 1960), especially chapters 13–16; and Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher, and Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians* (New York: Anchor Books, 1968).

51. Lazarus Leek Mawut, *Dinka Resistance to Condominium Rule, 1902–1932* (Khartoum University Press, 1983), p. 43. According to Edgar O'Ballance, 10,563 of the 60,000 Ansars who confronted the condominium forces were killed, and another 16,000 wounded, for the loss of 49 dead and 382 wounded on the Anglo-Egyptian side. *The Secret War in the Sudan: 1955–1972* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977), p. 24.

52. Lord Cromer, *Egypt in Transition* (London, 1914), p. xiv, introduction by Sidney Low. Quoted by Gawain Bell in *Deng and Daly Bonds of Silk*, p. 14. See also A. H. M. Kirk-Green's Appendix, "An Educational Profile of the Sudan Political Service," in Robert O. Collins and Francis M. Deng, eds., *The British in the Sudan 1898–1956* (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1984); and J. A. Mangan, "The Education of an Elite Imperial Administration: The Sudan Political Service and the British Public School System," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 15, no. 4 (1982), pp. 671–99.

53. See for instance Jamal Muhammad Ahmed's account in *Deng and Daly Bonds of Silk*, pp. 131–32.

54. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 52. See also Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, pp. 162, 172.

55. SGA/Sudan, Intelligence Report, no. 67, p. 14. Quoted in Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism*.

56. SGA/Sudan, Intelligence Report, no. 67, p. 17. Quoted in Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism*, p. 53.

57. *Ibid.*

58. SGA/Sudan, Intelligence Report, no. 67, p. 19. Quoted in Bashir,

Revolution and Nationalism.

59. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism*, p. 60.

60. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, p. 25.

61. Lord Cromer, *Report on the Sudan (1904)*, p. 50. Quoted in Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, pp. 16–17.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

63. Antony N. Allott, *Essays in African Law: With Special Reference to the Law in Ghana* (London: Butterworth, 1960), p. 10.

64. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, p. 25.

65. E. Guttman, "The Reception of Common Law in the Sudan," *Common Law Quarterly* vol 61 (1957), pp. 401–17, somewhat overstated the success of the adaptation when he said that the Sudan Penal Code was "neither British, Indian, French, or indeed wholly marked with the system in force in any other country. It was a scheme which may correctly be called Sudanese, insofar as it was truly framed with a special view to meet the requirements of the country." p. 402. Cited in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 26, n. 49. See also W. Twinning, "Some Aspects of Reception," *Sudan Law Journal and Report* (1957), pp. 229–252, cited in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 26, n. 50. For a comprehensive treatment of the subject and in particular the creative application of the qualifying clause "justice, equity and good conscience," as both a justification for and a limitation on the application of English law, see Zaki Mustafa, *The Common Law in the Sudan: An Account of the Justice, Equity and Good Conscience Provision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

66. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, p. 25.

67. Deng and Daly, *Bonds of Silk*, p. 134.

68. K. D. D. Henderson to the author.

69. Sir James Robertson, *Transition in Africa: From Direct Rule to Independence* (London: C. Hurst, 1974), p. 223.

70. Ibid.

71. Sir James Robertson made a similar remark to the southern nationalist Gordon Muortat in Britain, according to the evidence of the latter.

72. A story is told of an incident that occurred when the first Sudanese district commissioner in Missiriya district visited Muglad. An old man came to greet the commissioner. Not recognizing him among the Sudanese assembled, he asked where the commissioner was. When the commissioner was pointed out to him, he asked for his name. Muhammad Ibrahim Abd al-Hafeez was the name. "Since God created me, I have never heard of a District Commissioner with a name like that."

73. According to Bashir, "Mohamed Ahmed should not be looked upon as the first to proclaim himself a Mahdi or spiritual leader. Another Sudanese, Hamad al Nahlan (d. 1704), commonly known as Wad Al Turabi, had made a similar claim during a pilgrimage to Mecca, but it had not led him very far." *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 15. Needless to say, Wad Al-Turabi's spiritual ambitions might have helped to lead his descendant quite far, ostensibly in the name of Islamic modernization. In an address at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D. C., on May 12, 1992, Hassan al-Turabi himself, referring to his father, who had been a learned shari'a judge and had taught him a great deal, added, "I can also claim to have a sufist family background! He was presumably alluding to the original Wad Al-Turabi, the self-proclaimed Mahdi.

74. At the CSIS meeting Turabi, endorsing the usual definition of Arabism as cultural, declared rather unequivocally "If Arabism. is a racial concept,

I do not want to have anything to do with it.” The formulation implies that to some, though allegedly not to Turabi himself, it may be, and as argued in this study it is in popular perception. Even the “cultural” notion has “race” subtly built into it.

75. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal, 1991), p. 148.

76. The late Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, a leading Sudanese diplomat, scholar, and humanist wrote of “the relative peace that informs the African Muslim's nationalism. There is no duality in his thoughts; too preoccupied with the future to judge the past, too much of a piece to dispraise.” “Islam and Socio-Religious Thought of Africa,” in Charles Malik, ed., *God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (American University of Beirut, 1972), p. 39. In another context, Ahmed notes, “The [African] Muslim intellectual is tranquil.... He has no wounds carried over from his past experience of religion and its institutions.” *Ibid.*, p. 45.

77. Ali A. Mazrui, “The Multiple Marginality of the Sudan,” in Yusuf Fadl Hasan, ed., *Sudan in Africa* (Khartoum University Press, 1971), pp. 240, 249.

78. John O. Voll, for instance, has argued that without the “South,” there would be no “North.” “Northern Muslim Perspectives” in Joseph V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1991), p. 389.

79. This point was precisely made by a senior Northern administrator who had served in the South in a review article on the author's novel, *Seed of Re-*

demption, in which the hero is projected as advocating a national identity that is not confined to Arabism and Islam.

80. Abdel Rahman Al Bashir in response to the question on identity. As he explained, he was reporting on the Sudanese Arab perspective, not his own.

CHAPTER 3

1. Dunstan M. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York, London: Africana Publishing Company, 1981), p. 27. Another Southern author states that "Southerners did not know the North, and Northerners did not know the South. What little they knew of one another was tinged with suspicion." Bona Malwal, *People and Power in Sudan: The Struggle for National Stability* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), p. 21.

2. Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990), p. 12. According to one source, "It has been estimated that during the nineteenth century, Arab slavers carried off about 'two million blacks' from the southern Sudan." Edgar O'Ballance, *The Secret War in the Sudan: 1955–1972* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977), p. 20.

3. Sir Samuel Baker, quoted in W. W. Cash, *The Changing Sudan* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1930), p. 12. Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 28.

4. O'Ballance, *The Secret War in the Sudan: 1955–1972*, p. 22.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Godfrey Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 164–65. See also Francis Mading Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds: The Dinka in Afro-Arab Sudan* (Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 131, 214. As Lienhardt noted, "News of the

Northern Sudanese prophet, the Mahdi, reached Dinkaland too, and in some places, though known only by name, the Mahdi (in Dinka, Maadi) is assimilated in thought to the prophets of the Powers.” After quoting the hymn, Dr. Lienhardt observes, “The old man who sang this hymn said in reply to a question that Maadi was a great prophet they had heard of in the north: ‘We have heard that Divinity appeared in the North.’” p. 165. See also Francis Mading Deng, *Tradition and Modernization: A Challenge for Law among the Dinka of the Sudan* (Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 48–49, for more discussion on the point.

7. Indeed, it is widely acknowledged that the Mahdist revolt was in large part a protest against the abolition of slavery. As Gabriel R. Warburg has observed, “The suppression of the slave trade in the late 1870s was one of the major reasons for the success of the Mahdist revolt. This was so since the suppression of this trade harmed practically all echelons of Sudanese society.” “National Identity in the Sudan: Fact, Fiction and Prejudice in Ethnic and Religious Relations;” *Asian and African Studies*, no. 24 (1990), p. 153. See also p. 154 on the return of slavery during the Mahdiyya.

8. Cash, *The Changing Sudan*, p. 74. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 42.

9. G. W. Titherington, “The Raik Dinka of Bahr El Ghazal Province;” *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 10 (1927), pp. 159–60.

10. Francis Mading Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, p. 132.

11. Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, pp. 132–33; Francis Mading Deng, *Dinka Cosmology* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), pp. 41–42.
12. Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, pp. 133; and *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 76.
13. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 78.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
15. Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, pp. 137–38; *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 239.
16. Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, p. 138; *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 261–62.
17. Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, p. 138; *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 261.
18. Sayed Ismail el-Azhari, in his address to the Round Table Conference on the Problem of the Southern Sudan, March 16, 1965. Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 29.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 43, n. 5.
20. Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics, 1898–1985* (State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 150.
21. *Ibid.*
22. A similar moral crisis of comparison arises in the context of the Sudanese and Bosnian humanitarian tragedies, with which the author has been concerned as representative of the United Nations secretary-general for internally displaced persons. In response to a comment that even the tragedies of the African continent had not prepared him for what he had seen in the former Yugoslavia, a Sudanese journalist later posed a question that presumably reflected the official and perhaps also popular thinking in the North: How did the Northern Sudanese treatment of the displaced Southerners compare with the Serbian treatment of the

displaced Southerners compare with the Serbian treatment of the displaced Muslims? Obviously the motive of the question was to make the Sudan shine in comparison with the former Yugoslavia, which made the question unjustified on moral grounds. The issue was not whether the Sudanese situation was less objectionable than the situation in the former Yugoslavia; both were morally indefensible. Similarly slavery in whatever form was and is morally deplorable.

23. Warburg, "National Identity in the Sudan;" p. 153.

24. Robert O. Collins, *The Southern Sudan in Historical Perspective* (Tel Aviv, 1975), pp. 14–15. Quoted by Warburg, "National Identity in the Sudan;" p. 153.

25. Robert O. Collins, *Shadows in the Grass: Britain in the Southern Sudan, 1918–1956* (Yale University Press, 1983), p. 10.

26. "Such resistance;" according to Tim Niblock, had little in common with, and virtually no effect on, the Sudanese nationalist movement which developed from 1920 onwards." *Class and Power in Sudan*, p. 162.

27. Sir Harold McMichael, *The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), p. 101.

28. Collins, *Shadows in the Grass*, p. 14.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

32. Memorandum to the Marquess of Salisbury, quoted in Mekki Abbas, *The Sudan Question* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1952), p. 161.

33. Annual Report for 1904, Egypt, no. 1 (1905) Cd. 2409, p. 140. Quoted in Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan: A Study in Constitutional and Political Development 1899–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 71.

34. Ibid.

35. Initially the government was reluctant to permit the Christian missionaries even into the South on the grounds that, according to one authority, "They would 'spoil the natives.'" O'Ballance, *The Secret War in the Sudan*, p. 27. Only pressure from within Britain forced a change of policy.

36. See 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, pp. 77–78. For an overview, see Lilian Passmore Sanderson and Neville Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan 1899–1964* (Khartoum University Press, 1981), Chapter IV.

37. Cash, *The Changing Sudan*, p. 54. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 43.

38. Warburg, "National Identity in the Sudan" p. 156.

39. See appendix 6 in 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, pp. 245–49.

40. K. D. D. Henderson, *Sudan Republic* (London: Ernst Benn, 1965), pp. 162–63.

41. Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, p. 153; Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 77.

42. Francis M. Deng and M. W. Daly *Bonds of Silk: The Human Factor in the British Administration of the Sudan* (Michigan State University Press, 1989), p. 168.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86. Peter Woodward notes that at its height, the Sudan Political Service numbered only 150 at any one time. *Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1990), p. 20.

44. Collins, *Shadows in the Grass*, p. 12.

45. Deng and Daly, *Bonds of Silk*, p. 169.

46. Cash, *The Changing Sudan*, p. 45. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 32.
47. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Islam in the Sudan*, p. 38.
48. Muddathir, Grand Kadi [Chief Muslim Justice] of the Sudan, *A Memorandum for the Enactment of a Sudan Constitution Devised from the Principles of Islam*, 1956, p. 19; SANU, *Petition to the United Nations*, p. 19, quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 33.
49. See Henderson, *Sudan Republic*, p. 165.
50. Collins, *Shadows in the Grass*, pp. 14–15.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
53. Henderson, *Sudan Republic*, p. 164.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
55. Fabian Society, *The Sudan: The Road Ahead* (London: Gollanz, 1945), p. 25. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 34.
56. Trimingham, *The Christian Approach to Religion in the Sudan*, p. 73.
57. See Civil Secretary's Memorandum on Revision of Southern Policy, 1946, CS/SCR/ICI, December 16, 1946; 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, appendix 8.
58. 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 254.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 255.
60. Dispatch no. 89 (1945) to the British Colonial government in the Sudan by Killearn. Quoted in Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 38.
61. Civil Secretary's Memorandum; 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and*

Nationalism in the Sudan, appendix 8, pp. 253–54.

62. 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 254.

63. *Ibid.*

64. This conference is often cited by northerners as the occasion when the southerners decided for a fully united Sudan, but this is a disputed view. For the Southern viewpoint see Sudan Government, Report of the Commission of Enquiry, Southern Sudan Disturbances August 1955 (Sudan: McCorquedale, 1956), pp. 18–19; the speech of the representative of the Southern Front at the Round Table Conference on the Southern Problem; Joseph Oduhu and William Deng, *The Problem of the Southern Sudan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); and Oliver Albino, *The Sudan: A Southern Viewpoint* (Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 25–28. See also Bona Malwal, *People and Power in Sudan* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), pp. 24–30; Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, pp. 42–44; and Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan*, pp. 20–21.

65. This view was emphasized by nearly all the tribal chiefs, who were consistent even when many government officials altered their stand.

66. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict*, p. 145.

67. Deng and Daly *Bonds of Silk*, pp. 140–41.

68. Quoted in Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 94.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Proceedings of the Juba Conference on the Political Development of the Southern Sudan, June 1947. Appendix 9 in Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, pp. 146–47.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*

74. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 94.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 95. Even then, however, an independent united Sudan was

only dimly in sight. The same year the Southern Policy was reversed, the government published a pamphlet that still speculated on the possibility of the South's being eventually severed from the North: "The arguments whether such a course would be to the ultimate advantage of the Southern Sudan or the rest of Africa are many on both sides and the whole question might at some date form a proper subject for consideration by an international commission. Meanwhile, the present Government ... is proposing to associate sympathetic Northern Sudanese with the implementation of a policy which aims at giving the South the same chance of ultimate self-determination as has been promised to the North." Sudan Government, *The Sudan: A Record of Progress 1987*, quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 36.

76. 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 181.

77. Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 156.

78. Republic of the Sudan, Ministry of Interior, *Southern Sudan Disturbances August 1955: Report of the Commission of Enquiry* (Sudan: McCorquedale & Co., 1955), p. 40.

79. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 66.

80. *Ibid.*

81. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, pp. 136–37.

82. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 67.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

84. Henderson, *Sudan Republic*, p. 177.

85. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 65.

86. Malwal, *People and Power in Sudan*, pp. 54–55.

87. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 67.

88. Deng and Daly, *Bonds of Silk*, p. 96.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid., p. 97.

92. In a private letter to the author, cited in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 36.

93. Report of the Commission of Enquiry, p. 19; also quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 45, n. 31.

CHAPTER 4

1. According to Muhammad Omar Bashir, the military college, the first of its kind in British African colonies, “was responsible for producing the officer class which played such an important and significant role in the history of the Sudan.” Early recruits were “mostly black Sudanese since non-black Sudanese preferred to enter the Gordon Memorial College....” *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (Barnes & Noble, 1974), pp. 42, 58.

2. Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story* (London: J. Murry, 1946), p. 141.

3. As Tim Niblock noted, At a number of critical stages in the development of the Sudanese nationalist movement and in subsequent Sudanese politics, students played a significant role in influencing the course of events.” *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics, 1898–1985* (State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 125.

4. Hasan Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism: 1919–1925*, Sudanese Literary Series, no. 14 (Khartoum University Press, 1985), pp. 40–42. This was despite and perhaps because of the fact that the British wanted to disassociate the Sudan from Egypt. “They not only rejected the claim

that Egypt and the Sudan were ethnologically one, but went on to prove that Egypt's record in the past, and the Egyptian officials' record, since the reconquest, were hardly to be commended. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 63.

5. Sudan Government, *Memorandum on the Future Status of the Sudan*, appendix 2, pp. 52–53; quoted in Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 68.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 73.

8. According to Bashir, Ali Abd al-Latif “was the son of a Dinka mother, a slave of Mahamdeen Mahamdeen from Khandaq, and a Nuba father, a slave of Ahmed Hassan, a Dongolawi, also from Khandaq in Dongola province.” *Ibid.*, p. 73. An interesting question arises as to why he is more popularly known as a Dinka, not a Nuba.

9. Hasan Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism: 1919–1925*, Sudanese Literary Series, no. 14 (Khartoum University Press, 1985), p. 49.

10. Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 1990), p. 70.

11. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan: A Study in Constitutional and Political Development 1899–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 104.

12. Hasan Abdin calls it “The Demands of the Nation.” *Early Sudanese Nationalism*, p. 48.

13. Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics 1898–1985* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 165–68. Commenting later on

the article, the Ewatts Report observed: "The document, for writing which he was convicted, contains no word in favour of Egypt; it advocates the government of the Sudan by the Sudanese and the ending of foreign rule ... much of its contents however was an expression of sentiments which were and still are genuinely shared by the bulk of the educated younger generation and even some of their seniors." Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism*, p. 74.

14. Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism*, p. 50.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

16. Muhammad Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: From Conflict to Peace* (London: C. Hurst, 1975), p. 134.

17. 'Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, pp. 106–107.

18. Tim Niblock noted that "most of the cadets who passed through the [Military] School came from that segment of the population which Condominium officials referred to as 'blacks'.... The army authorities appear to have deliberately fostered this pattern of officer recruitment." *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 140.

19. Following the 1924 events, the governor-general reported that "he could no longer trust any junior ex-cadet officer ... and that nearly all Arab and Sudanese officers except ranking officers were anti-British ... " Sudan Government Archives, Summary of Events in the Sudan, August 9 to September 1924, quoted in Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* p. 83.

20. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, pp. 89–90.

21. Hason Abdin, *Early Sudanese Nationalism*, p. 84.

22. Gabriel R. Warburg, "National Identity in the Sudan: Fact, Fiction and Prejudice in Ethnic and Religious Relations," *Asian and African Studies*,

no. 24 (July 1990), pp. 151–202, p. 155.

23. Ewatts Report, secret report of special committee commissioned in 1925 to enquire into political organizations in the Sudan culminating in 1924 disturbances, quoted in Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, PP. 73–74.

24. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 109. Peter Woodward cites the article as stating, “Low is the nation if it can be led by Ali ‘Abd al-Latif.” Sudan, 1898–1989: *The Unstable State* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1990), p. 56. The author cites Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 168. Niblock also quotes the paper: “The League should know ... that the country is insulted when its smallest and humblest men, without status in society, pretend to come forward and express the country's opinion.” It has been observed that “the leaders of the White Flag League had little support outside the small and politically immature intelligentsia and the handful of Sudanese Army officers who founded it.” Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society: The Case of Sudan* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), p. 94.

25. Deng and Daly, *Bonds of Silk: The Human Factor in the British Administration of the Sudan* (Michigan State University Press, 1989), p. 191.

26. ‘Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 109.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

28. Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 142. In addition, there was “the Camel Corps in Kordofan, with a large element of camel-borne soldiers to patrol the vast desert expanses.” Edgar O’Ballance, *The Secret War in the Sudan: 1955–1972* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1977), p. 38.

29. See Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 104.

30. A recent publication refers to the 1924 revolution as “led by an assortment of radicals who included ... Army officers.” And when the author later

mentioned the names of Abd al-Fadel al-Maz and Ali Abd al-Latif, it was in reference to 'an occasion to celebrate the past glory of the Sudanese military' with no reference to their Southern origin. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in the Sudan* (London: Grey Seal, 1991), pp. 29, 96.

31. Because the movement was narrow-based, "England had therefore no difficulty in crushing... [it] and, following the expulsion of the Egyptians from the Sudan in 1924, Sudanese nationalism of the intelligentsia brand vanished from the political scene for the next fourteen years." Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society*, p. 94.

32. 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 109. fn. 1.

33. Annual Report for 1926, Sudan No. 2 (1927), 'Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 68. The attitude of the British administration toward the traditional rulers was: "We must learn to regard [the Chiefs] as members of a natural aristocracy the traditional rulers of the country, and we must treat them as such.... They are the holders of the local authority ... the authority of birth." Eboue, "Memorandum on Native Administration," *Sudan Notes and Records*, 44 (1943). Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *Tradition and Modernization: A Challenge for Law among the Dinka of the Sudan* (Yale University Press), p. 330.

34. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 66 n. 26.

35. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 147.

36. El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution*, p. 29.

37. Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, pp. 161–62.

38. *Ibid.*

39. 'Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, pp. 110–

11.

40. "The concentration was on the glories of the Islamic dynasties and of Arabic culture...." Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 181.

41. Prominent among these were Abu Ruf and al-Fajr groups. For a discussion of these groups and how they evolved into political activists and eventually into parties see *ibid.*, pp. 180–84.

42. 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, pp. 113–14. "African soil" here signifies the "physical" location of the Sudan in Africa as opposed to the more substantive identification with Arab culture and nationalist sentiments.

43. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," *African Affairs*, vol. 89. (July 1990), p. 372.

44. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 110.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–11.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

47. Full text in K. D. D. Henderson, *The Making of the Modern Sudan* (London: Faber and Faber, 1953), pp. 542–43.

48. Deng and Daly, *Bonds of Silk*, p. 72.

49. Henderson, *Making of the Modern Sudan*, p. 565. For the reasons behind the exclusion of the South from the Advisory Council, see also Dunstan Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York and London: Africana Publishing, 1981), p. 37.

50. Khalid Duran, "The Centrifugal Forces of Religion in Sudanese Politics," *ORIENT*, vol. 26, no. 4 (December 1985), pp. 574–75. Tim Niblock observed, "However great the intellectual hostility which the younger graduates harboured towards sectarianism and the Sudanese establishment ... the bonds of family and residence could still give their activities a sectarian colouring." *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 183.

51. Khalid Duran, "The Centrifugal Forces of Religion in Sudanese Politics," pp. 572–600. As Tim Niblock noted, "Rather than the graduate elite mobilizing the populace into a national movement, the new party leaders' primary political constituencies were within the Sudanese establishment. The relationships between establishment patrons, and the party leaders at times underwent stress, especially on the Khatmiyah Ashiqqah side, but the dynamics of mutual dependence would generally bring them together again." Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, pp. 195–96.

52. The Communist party "was by far the most important of the radical nationalist groupings which emerged at this time." Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 199.

53. Duran, "The Centrifugal Forces of Religion in Sudanese Politics." p. 575.

54. Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society*, p. 147. See also Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, pp. 107–32 for a discussion of these political and economic forces.

55. Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society*, p. 147.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

58. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, pp. 107–108.

59. Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism*, p. 149.

60. El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan*, p. 38.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

63. Ibid., pp. 35–36.

64. Duran, “The Centrifugal Forces of Religion in Sudanese Politics,” p. 581.

65. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, “The Elusive Islamic Constitution: The Sudanese Experience,” *ORIENT*, vol. 26, no. 3 (September 1985), p. 332.

66. Duran, “The Centrifugal Forces of Religion” p. 581.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid., p. 338. For a comprehensive view of the ideas of Ustadh Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, see *The Second Message of Islam*, trans. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (Syracuse University Press, 1987).

69. At the meeting on May 12, 1992, at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Turabi responded to a question on the execution of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha by denying any involvement, explaining vengefully that the man considered himself God and that he, Turabi, would have preferred to let God die a natural death.

70. Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan*, p. 202.

71. Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial: Reflections on Arab and African Politics* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974), p. 208.

72. Ibid. Clement Mboro, it should be remembered, was to become one of the leaders of the Southern struggle for equality in the liberation movement.

73. Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990), pp. 21–22.

74. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, pp. 451–52.

75. 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 198, n. 4.

76. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 135.
77. 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 199.
78. Francis Mading Deng, *Recollections of Babo Nimir* (London: Ithaca Press, 1982), P. 43.
79. Bashir, *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan*, p. 182.
80. Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial*, p. 57.

81. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 231. And as Tim Niblock noted, "Southerners remained peripheral to the debate over independence arrangements during 1955, except when their votes were needed in Parliament. Such attention as the major northern political parties did give to southern Sudan, moreover, was motivated by short-term political interest and often had destructive consequences. Promises were made by northern politicians in the course of the 1953 elections which bore little relation to what these politicians intended, or were able, to do." *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 215.

82. Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 146.

83. According to one source, Mahjoub was described by a British commentator at the United Nations as "a brilliant and successful lawyer" but "unreliable, vain and colour-conscious." He was also described as "losing no opportunity to intervene in a debate with what we must charitably regard as a pathological craving for limelight." Quoted in Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 151.

CHAPTER 5

1. Republic of Sudan, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in the Southern Sudan during August 1955* (Khartoum: McCorquedale & Co. Ltd., 1955), p. 7.

2. Dunstan M. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York and London: Africana Publishing, 1981), p. 8.

3. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan: A Study in Constitutional and Political Development 1899–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 8. He says: "Today, the slave trade is, of course, a long dead issue; but this has not prevented its use by propagandists hostile to the unity of the Sudan. British policy on the other hand, has saddled the independent Sudan with its most intractable problem by creating a form of local patriotism in the South which, though it is not universally accepted there, has sought to speak in the name of

the whole region, and in its more extreme brands, has — reportedly with the assistance of Israel and other foreign countries — stood for the establishment, by means of violence, of a separate Southern state.”

As Mansour Khalid has observed in *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1990), p. 133: “Given the deep rifts caused by the Condominium period in Sudanese society as a whole, the cultural separation of the south, the unequal distribution of wealth throughout the Sudan, and the deliberate fostering of divisions within Sudanese society the priority of the Sudanese governments on the attainment of independence ought surely to have been the establishment of a programme for national unity, however vague that might seem initially. Tragically this was not the case; on a number of crucial fronts the first Sudanese Government failed totally to find a national perspective, and brought disaster to their nation at the expense of furthering their own narrow causes, from the personal to the sectarian.”

4. Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (Exeter: Ithaca, 1990), pp. 23, 20.

5. *Sudan Law Journal and Report* (1962), p. 83. These sentences were reduced on appeal to five and three years respectively. Quoted in Francis Mading

Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 39.

6. The motive behind the Act was articulated by the Government thus: "It is clear that the missionary organizations have directed most of their internal and external efforts against the national government. Their main objective has been to have the confidence in the Government shaken and the unity of the nation undermined. It became necessary, therefore, to pass an Act aiming at the regularization of the work of the missions." *Expulsion of the Missionaries*, p. 11. Cited in Deng, *Dynamics*, p. 45, n. 41.

7. *Ibid.*, 17. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 40.

8. Bonaventure (Bona) Bulabek Kwol, a brilliant medical student in Padova, son of Chief Kwol Arob of the Ngok Dinka, with his colleague, Justo Muludi-ang, were most instrumental in generating support for the new movement in Europe. In the summer of 1962, they entrusted me with the first copy of the SACDN'U constitution to be passed on to Natale Olwak and Isaiah Majok, who were members of the clandestine movement inside the country.

9. Starrs McCall, "The Rise of a Provisional Government in Southern Sudan;" in social science council seminar held in the University of East Africa, 9–12 December, 1969, mimeographed; quoted in Muhammad Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: From Conflict to Peace* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), p. 53.

10. Quoted in Muhammad Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 84; also in Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 53.

11. Dunstan M. Wai, "Political Trends in the Sudan and the Future of the South," in Wai ed., *The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration*, (London: Frank Cass, 1973), p. 164. Tim Niblock has argued that, "The most important, yet least discussed, factor which made

possible the conclusion of the Addis Ababa Agreement relates to changes in political authority within the southern armed opposition," in particular the unification of the movement under Joseph Lagu. *Class and Power in the Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics 1898–1985*, (State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 272.

12. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 68. According to the author, "Israel had found it in her own interest to interfere as a diversionary tactic in her war against the Arab countries," p. 93. See also Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 277.

13. Quoted in Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 66.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

15. Abel Alier in a speech delivered at the Makerere Students' Guild Center, Kampala, Uganda, February 9, 1970. Quoted by Dunstan M. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York and London: Africana Publishing, 1981), p. 92. So great was the level of animosity and mistrust that even during the early period of the October 1964 revolution, when the government was demonstrating a sincere change of policy toward the South, relations between the North and the South continued to be strained and violence escalated. On December 6, 1964, hostilities broke out in Khartoum between southerners and northerners. Clement Mboro, a veteran of the Juba Conference and the minister of the interior, had been expected back from a fact-finding tour of the South. When he was delayed, the large crowd of southerners waiting at the airport to receive him assumed some foul play by the authorities and went into a violent rage. Many innocent lives were lost as a result of the clashes that ensued.

16. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 213.

17. See Oliver Albino, *The Sudan: A Southern Viewpoint* (Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 60–61. See also Bona Malwal, *People and Power in the Sudan: The Struggle for National Stability* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), pp. 39; 96–97; and Alier, *Southern Sudan*, p. 33. Because *The Vigilant* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the South, reported the incidents, its registered proprietor, Darurs Beshar, and its editor, Bona Malwal, were arrested and taken to court. The editions that reported the incident were seized and the paper suspended. The accused were tried and acquitted.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 27.

20. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 228.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 231–32.

24. Malwal, *People and Power*, p. 96.

25. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 192.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 38.

28. Francis Mading Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds: The Dinka in Afro-Arab Sudan* (Yale University Press, 1978), p. 167.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 167–68.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 168–69.

31. Francis Mading Deng, *Dinka Cosmology* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), pp. 122–28.

32. Paul Howell, Michael Lock, and Stephen Cobb, *The Jonglei Canal: Impact and Opportunity* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 258.

33. *The Sudan Almanac* (1963), p. 149. Cited in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 39.

34. K. D. D. Henderson, *Sudan Republic* (London: Ernst Benn, 1965), p. 183. As Tim Niblock wrote, “While the military regime did examine possibilities of forwarding economic development in the Southern Sudan, the main concern of government policy lay in Arabization and Islamization.” *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 224.

35. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 188.

36. Addressing the Southerners on a visit to the South, Clement Mboro, said: “Your new Government, which men of good-will and democratic principles all over the Sudan ... have helped to bring to power by overthrowing the military dictatorship with bare hands, has recognized, for the first time in the history of this country that there are ethnic, cultural and geographical differences between the Northern Sudanese and Southern Sudanese.

...[A]ll bad things come to an end, and I hope, this is a beginning of the end to all our sufferings in this part of the country.... I therefore appeal to you my fellow Southerners wherever you are today to create an atmosphere in which we can put to test the policies of the new Government in which I am your representative.” Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, pp. 82–83, n. 10

37. Inaugural address by Prime Minister Sayed Sir El Khatim Khalifa, pp. 5–6, quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 73.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2; quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, pp. 73–74.

39. *The Speech of the Southern Front*, p. 10. See Deng, *Dynamics of*

Identification, p. 74.

40. Speech delivered by Mr. Aggrey Jaden to the Round Table Conference, P. 4. Quoted in Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 16. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 41.

41. In the editorial of its March 23, 1965, issue. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 41.

42. For the northern proposals, see Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, appendix 16, pp. 174–78. For the southerners' response to the northern proposals, and for the position of SANU and the Southern Front, see appendixes 7 and 8.

43. For more on the Conference, see Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*. Mr. Bashir was secretary to the conference. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 75.

44. Alier, *Southern Sudan*, p. 36.

45. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, pp. 11–13.

46. The resistance to the radical changes envisaged by the October Revolution had begun during the transitional period. Tim Niblock wrote: "The united parties front centered their campaign against the dominant elements in the transitional government on the demand for earlier elections. This goal was pursued with increasing vituperation.... Sirr al-Khatim al-Khalifah ... formed a new government, composed of ministers from the Umma Party, the NUP, the Islamic Charter front and the Southern front. The radical experiment was over." *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 228.

47. Alier, *Southern Sudan*, pp. 38–39.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Nimeiri's announcement on 9 June 1969 stated the regime's intention to grant "regional autonomy to the Southern Sudan Provinces within the framework of a new integral socialist Sudan." According to Wai, the policy

statement “recognized the cultural, racial, religious, economic and social differences between the North and the South....” *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 145.

50. It is now generally established that the Communist Party, in particular the leadership, merely rendered support for the coup, but were not party to it. Indeed, the Party was divided on the issue of their cooperation and many of the leaders would soon come into conflict with the new regime, culminating in their total break before the abortive 1971 coup led by elements from the left. See, for examples, Gabriel Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism in a Traditional Society: The Case of Sudan* (London: Frank Cass, 1978); and Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan* pp. 236–41, 249–56.

51. Joseph Garang, *Revolution in Action* (Khartoum: Government Printing Press, 1970), p. 8. “For Garang the solution was development and the elimination of disparity.” Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 146.

52. Joseph Garang's extreme commitment to development as the real solution is obvious in this passage from an address he made to the British House of Commons on April 16, 1970: “As for the problem of our rebels in the forest or in Uganda, and who are threatening to start trouble, and who have been making contacts with certain foreign organizations and governments, all that we say to them is this: ‘We will construct; you destroy: We will build schools; you burn them down: We will build hospitals; you destroy them: We will build roads; you burn and break bridges. It shall be the people of the South to decide for themselves: Who is building and who is destroying. In the end, it is they who will determine who shall be the political leaders: Those who are destroying or those who are building.’” Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 83, n. 22.

Garang later became critical of the government because his line of approach

was not being followed with the speed he had desired. In a press conference he held in Khartoum in April 1970, he said: "It is true that we declared a sound policy for the South. But what matters is the implementation of that policy. What is important is what every ministry did to execute its part of the plans and projects. Action is not going on with the required speed ... Only with achievements which the ordinary Dinka or Nuer sees under his eyes can we rebuff imperialist propaganda.... The real danger to the revolution will come from the South and not from Aba where El Hadi's rebellion was easily defeated." See also Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, pp. 83–84, n. 22.

53. See Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, pp. 86–87. See also Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Peace and Unity in the Sudan: An African Achievement* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 43.

54. According to Tim Niblock, "While Abd al-Khaliq Mahjoub probably knew of the intended seizure and failed to prevent it, most members of the political bureau and central committee had neither given their prior approval to, nor were complicit in, the action." *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 256. See also Warburg, *Islam, Nationalism and Communism*.

55. According to Muhammad Bashir Hamid, "Following his election to the Presidency of the Republic in October 1971, Numayri re-established contacts, begun earlier by the leftists, with Southern leaders, and began to press forward with a programme of North-South reconciliation which ironically enough, was based on the original proposals of the SCP (Sudan Communist Party) [which] he had so recently crushed." "Confrontation and Reconciliation within an African Context: The Case of Sudan," *The World Quarterly*, vol. 5, no. 2 (April, 1983), p. 322. See also, Nelson Kasfir, "Sudan's Addis Ababa Treaty: Intraorganizational. Factors in the Politics of Compromise," in *Post-Independence Sudan*, proceedings of a seminar held at the Center of African Studies, University of Edinburgh (November 1980).

56. As quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 79.

57. Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 79.

57. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 79.

58. *Ibid.*

59. "It became obvious that pursuit of Arabism and close alliances with the Arab world were incompatible with the attainment of a solution with the Southern Sudanese." Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan*, p. 148.

60. Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 80.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Sudan Permanent Mission to the United Nations, press release, "Joseph Lagu Back in Khartoum" (1972), p. 1. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 81.

63. As Niblock noted, "National unity and economic development ... now came to constitute the focus around which the regime sought to build up its claim to legitimacy." *Class and Power in Sudan*, p. 256.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 279–80.

65. The most authentic source on this is Nimeiri himself in a conversation with the author.

66. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, pp. 129–31.

67. Niblock, it will be recalled, placed emphasis on the unification of the movement under Lagu as the most important factor behind the settlement. *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 272. Niblock, however, recognized several other factors, including the internal pressures on the government and regional pressures on the movement and the mediatory role of credible third parties. pp. 275–76.

68. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 131.

69. Alier, *Southern Sudan*, p. 95.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

74. Niblock reports that "the Israeli government promised Lagu increased assistance if he should renounce the settlement package. Ultimately, however, a countervailing pressure proved more significant...." *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 277.

75. Joseph Garang, *Revolution in Action*. Quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 84, n. 22.

76. Francis Mading Deng, *Tradition and Modernization: A Challenge for Law among the Dinka of the Sudan* (Yale University Press, 1971), p. 108; and Francis Mading Deng, *Recollections of Babo Nimir* (London: Ithaca Press, 1982), pp. 36–37.

77. Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 7.

78. Hamid, "Confrontation and Reconciliation within an African Context," p. 322. Peter Woodward viewed the Addis Ababa Agreement as "dependent regionalism" which was "designed to give sufficient regional powers to appease the South, while creating enough ties to bind the region into Sudan as a whole." Under the system the North provided patronage to the South to support national unity. The South was thus attached to rather than incorporated into the national political system. *Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1990), p. 143.

79. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," *African Affairs*, vol. 89, no. 356 (July 1990), pp. 371–89; 378.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*

82. Bona Malwal, *People and Power in Sudan* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981), p. 152.

83. As Hamid observed, "During the numerous challenges to Numayri's rule in the North, particularly from 1973, there was no evidence of spontaneous popular support for the regime except significantly from the Southern Sudanese. The South had, in effect, become a vital power-base for Numayri's regime. In this sense, the Southern factor, for the first time since independence, had come to play a significant role in Northern politics, much to the advantage and indeed the very survival of the regime." "Confrontation and Reconciliation within an African Context," p. 328.

84. *Ibid.*

85. See Carey N. Gordon, "The Islamic Legal Revolution: The Case of the Sudan," in *International Lawyer*, vol. 19, no. 3 (1985), pp. 793–815; and Akolda M. Tier, "The Legal System of the Sudan," *Modern Legal Systems Encyclopedia* (1985), pp. 649–727.

86. For Sadiq al-Mahdi's views on the September Laws, see *Islam and the Problem of the South* (Khartoum, 1984). For the philosophy of Ustadh Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, see Abdullahi Ahmed An-N'aim, *The Second Message of Islam* (Syracuse University Press, 1987). On Mahmoud Muhammad Taha's trial and execution, see Abdullahi A. An-Na'im, "The Islamic Law of Apostasy and its Modern Application: A Case from the Sudan," in *Religion*, vol. 16 (1986), p. 197.

87. Besides, such assertiveness implicitly challenged the arrangement of

“dependent regionalism” which Peter Woodward described as “a patronage to support national unity” since it rested on a subordinate “attached to, rather than incorporated in, the national political system.” Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State, pp. 142–46.

88. The fact that Nimeiri was marking time to split the South and use Lagu's complaint to that end at the right time was revealed to the author in conversation with the president in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. Amin had invaded Tanzania and Nimeiri as chairman of the Organization of African Unity was involved in a mediation process. Complaining bitterly about the ingratitude of the south, despite all he had done for them, he said he was going to pull back and see how they could do without him, a thought the author of course argued against. Then he said, “They do not know that Joseph Lagu is urging me to divide the South and I am resisting his demand.” When he eventually declared Lagu's demand, it is the opinion of this author that the move no longer had to do with Lagu's original request, but Nimeiri's own agenda. But Lagu was flattered to be cited by the president as the original source of the idea, which he then pursued with a vengeance.

89. For the government use of tribal militias against the SPLM/SPLA, see Muhammad M. A. Salih, “Tribal Militias, SPLA/SPLM and the Sudanese State: New Wine in Old Bottles,” in Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed and Gunnar M. Sørbo, eds., *Management of the Crisis in the Sudan. Proceedings of the Bergen Forum 23–24 February, 1989* (Bergen: Center for Development Studies, University of Bergen, 1989), pp. 65–82.

90. Khalid Mustafa Medani, “Factors Contributing to the Political Ascendancy of the Muslim Brethren in Sudan,” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 12, no. 3 (Summer 1990); Bona Malwal, “Islamic Banks Finally Bury the Sudanese National Economy,” *Sudan Democratic Gazette* (September 1990), pp. 3, 5; and Abdullahi A. An-Na'im, “Constitutionalism and Islamization in the Sudan,” *Third World Legal Studies* (1988), pp. 99–118. An-Na'im writes, “Another significant development in the late 1970s was the move towards the so-called Islamic banking, encouraged by the unprecedented tax exemptions and

independence granted to the Sudanese Faisal Islamic Bank in 1978. This enhanced the Muslim Brothers' financial power and allowed them greater economic leverage which they utilized in pressing the regime toward the full application of shari'a." p. 106.

91. Khalid Medani, "Factors Contributing to the Political Ascendancy of the Muslim Brethren in Sudan," p. 47.

92. Ibid., p. 48.

93. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," *African Affairs*, vol. 89, no. 358 (July 1990), pp. 371–89. See also Abdelwahab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal, 1991), pp. 115, 149.

94. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, "Discovering the South," p. 380.

95. Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 283.

96. Woodward, *Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State*, p. 198. Woodward adds: "Virtually every political movement, except for a hard core of unionists, was drawn in at some time or other and each could join in welcoming Nimeiri's downfall in April, 1985." For more on Nimeiri's shifts and turns, see Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, pp. 341–42, where the author quotes from John Garang's enumeration of instances in which Nimeiri shifted positions in disregarding agreements he had made with other parties, including the commu-

nists, the Republican Brothers, the South, Sadiq al-Mahdi, and the Muslim Brothers.

97. Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan*, p. 291.

98. El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution*, p. 179. Turabi himself (while serving as the president's advisor on legal affairs and after having been attorney general) once intimated to me that he realized he was being contained, perhaps to be also used against Rasheed El Tahir, the new attorney general, a plan he intended to abort by leaving the real decisions to Al-Tahir. He wondered why Nimeiri kept him in the cabinet and provided his own answer, that Nimeiri must of course have his own objective, and needless to say, Turabi, too, had his own objectives, and both of them knew the truth. Nimeiri also confided to me his own deep suspicions of the Muslim Brethren, in particular Turabi, whom he described as "a most dangerous man" a private condemnation that would soon become public.

99. Woodward has argued that "the limited capacity of the state in Sudan, under different rulers and different forms of government, has necessitated heterogeneous forms of clientelism which have constrained development because of the competition and incompatibility of various groups, parties, and movements; and that this has led not only to unstable governments but has threatened the survival of the state itself with significant international as well as domestic consequences." *Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State*, p. 9.

100. El-Affendi, "Discovering the South," p. 382.

101. *Ibid.*

102. *Ibid.*

103. *Ibid.*, p. 383.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 384.

105. *Ibid.*

106. Ibid., pp. 380–81.

107. Alier, *Southern Sudan*, p. 277.

CHAPTER 6

1. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, "On Theories and Hypotheses in Writings Concerning Southern Sudan," University of Juba First Conference on "The Role of Southern Sudanese People in the Building of Modern Sudan" (Juba, February 26–28, 1985), p. 2.

2. J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Christian Church in Post-War Sudan* (World Dominion Press, 1949), p. 34. See Francis Mading Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 87.

3. Ibid., p. 251.

4. As Muhammad Omar Bashir observed, while some tribes accepted Islam and adopted Arab dress and a form of pidgin Arabic, "The Nilotics however, remained untouched by the influences of Islam. As long as Islam and Arabic were associated with the administration and the slave traders, they were resisted." *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 13.

5. Francis Mading Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds: The Dinka in Afro-Arab Sudan* (Yale University Press, 1978), p. 50; Francis Mading Deng, *Dinka Cosmology* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), pp. 51–52.

6. Jean Buxton, *Religion and Healing in Mandari* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 29.

7. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 172.

8. Godfrey Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience: The Religion of the Dinka* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 26. A common way to express willingness to die is to say that one has had children to continue the name. Chief Ayeny Aleu, determined to speak his mind, whatever the risks, said, "Let us die as long as we leave our children behind to continue our names! Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, P. 47. And in the same vein, Chief Stephen Thongkol remarked, "I am a man who does not fear death. If I die, then I have children." Ibid.

9. Sharon Hutchinson, "Relations between the Sexes among the Nuer," *Africa*, vol. 50, no. 4 (1980), p. 375. Immortality through procreation is a widely shared value not only in African traditional society, but also in Islamic culture. Radcliffe Brown observed: "An African marries because he wants children.... The most important part of the 'value' of a woman is her child bearing capacity." "Introduction to the Analysis of Kinship Systems," Norman W. Bell and Ezra F. Vogel, eds., *A Modern Introduction to the Family* (New York: Free Press, 1960), p. 230.

10. For the system among the Nuer, see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "The Nuer," in Evans-Pritchard Meyer, eds., *African Political Systems* (Oxford University Press, 1940), and among the Dinka, see Godfrey Lienhardt, "Western Dinka," in John Middleton and David Tait, eds., *Tribes without Rulers: Studies in African Segmentary Systems* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958). As a result of historical influences from the Arab North, combined with their anomalous position under the condominium rule, the position of leadership among the Ngok Dinka of Kordofan, as will be seen later, is more centralized than among other Dinka tribes.

11. P. P. Howell, "Notes on the Ngok Dinka," *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 32, part 2 (1951), p. 247.

12 Ibid nn 117–18

12. Ibid., pp. 117–18.

13. Evans-Pritchard, “The Nuer,” pp. 147–48.

14. Ibid., p. 182.

15. Cole and Huntington have noted: “At the center of Dinka religion are the Masters of the Spear, among the Ngok it is the great chief, bany dit, who is holder of the Sacred Spears” (chap. 5, p. 7). David Cole and Richard Huntington, *African Rural Development: Some Lessons from Abyei*, unpublished manuscript (Harvard Institute for International Development, October 1985).

16. Godfrey Lienhardt, “The Dinka of the Nile Basin,” *The Listener*, vol. 69 (1963), p. 828. Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *Tradition and Modernization: A Challenge for Law among the Dinka of the Sudan* (Yale University Press, 1971), p. 50, n. 47. See also Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience*, p. 248.

17. Evans-Pritchard, “The Nuer,” p. 164.

18. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 195.

19. Evans-Pritchard argues that the age-sets among the Nuer “have no definite military functions” even though “youth who have recently been initiated are anxious for their first raid, and consider that they ought to earn for their set a reputation for valor, and it is likely that raids were generally conducted in the main by men of the most junior set.” Evans-Pritchard, however, sees the role of age-sets as a cross-cutting one that both supplements and modifies the kinship system. “The Nuer,” p. 253. Howell has noted that “the age-set system ... appears to have a greater functional meaning among the Ngork

[sic] than any other Nilotics, Dinka, Nuer or Shilluk of whom I have had first hand experience." "The Ngork Dinka," p. 258. For a detailed discussion of the age-set system among Nilotic societies with special reference to the Atuot, see John W. Burton, "Atuot Age Categories and Marriage," *Africa*, vol. 50, no. 2-(1980), pp. 146–60.

20. J. C. Buxton, *Chiefs and Strangers: A Study of Political Assimilation among the Mandari* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 124.

21. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 58.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

23. Buxton, *Chiefs and Strangers*, p. 224.

24. G. W. Titherington, "The Raik Dinka of Bahr El Ghazal Province," *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 10 (1927), p. 183.

25. Sharon Hutchinson, "Relations between the Sexes among the Nuer," *Africa*, vol. 50, no. 4 (1980), p. 371.

26. Buxton, *Religion and Healing in Mandari*, pp. 209–10.

27. Charles G. Seligman, *The Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan* (London: Routledge, 1932), p. 178.

28. Lienhardt, *Divinity and Experience*, p. 46.

29. A university professor of history, in a private discussion of the issue with the author.

30. For a collection and analysis of these tales, see Francis Mading Deng, *Dinka Folktales: African Stories from the Sudan* (London and New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1974).

31. The extracts cited here are also available in Deng, *Africans of Two Worlds*, in which the raw material in *Dinka Cosmology* is reproduced in

analytic form.

32. Deng, Dinka Cosmology, p. 279.

33. Ibid., p. 277.

34. Ibid., p. 276.

35. Ibid., p. 270.

36. Ibid., p. 171.

37. Ibid., p. 242.

38. Ibid., p. 245.

39. Ibid., p. 44.

40. According to Muhammad Omar Bashir, "This policy enabled the Sudan government to use its limited financial resources on education in the north, paying no attention to the south. Despite their limited resources and little interest in education and training as such, the missionaries took responsibility for education in the South. The result ... was a growing gap between the northern and southern Sudan in schools and educational institutions, and also in the quality and type of education". *Revolution and Nationalism in the Sudan* (Barnes & Noble, 1974), p. 43.

41. For samples of these songs, see the collection in Francis Mading Deng, *The Dinka and Their Songs*, the Oxford Library of African Literature Series, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, G. Lienhardt, and W. H. Whiteley eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973).

42. Godfrey Lienhardt, "The Dinka and Catholicism," in *Religious Organization and Religious Experience* (London: Academic Press 1985), p. 87.

43. Lilian Passmore Sanderson and Neville Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan, 1899–1964* (London: Ithaca Press and Khartoum University Press, 1981), p. 7.

44. Lienhardt, Diversity and Experience, p. 46.

45. Ibid., p. 46.

46. Ibid., p. 46.

47. Deng, *The Dinka and Their Songs*.

48. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 286.

49. Bona Malwal, *People and Power in Sudan*, pp. 16–17.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., p. 17.

52. Dunstan M. Wai, *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York, London: Africana Publishing Company, 1981), p. 182.

53. See Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 269.

54. Ibid., p. 269.

55. Ibid., p. 309.

56. From a collection by the author. First translated and quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *The Dinka of the Sudan* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1972), reissued with changes by Waveland Press, 1984, pp. 150–51. Cited here with minor changes indicated by brackets.

57. Lienhardt, "The Dinka and Catholicism," pp. 89–90.

58. Ibid., pp. 89–90.

59. In a more recent incident, a Nuer "prophet" mobilized his people to attack Malakal, inflicting heavy casualties on Government troops and Northern families. The reprisals by the Government were devastating. But by far the most effective and sustained religious response to the human suffering has been through the Church.

60. Marc R. Nikkel, "Aspects of Contemporary Religious Change among the Dinka," in Sudan: Environment and People (Conference papers, Second International Sudan Studies Conference, University of Durham, April 8–11, 1991), pp. 90–100; 92.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid., p. 93.

63. Ibid., p. 97.

64. Ibid., p. 98.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. The revised version quoted by Professor E. E. Evans-Pritchard states: "Ah, the land of the rustling of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia; that sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters, (saying) Go ye swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people terrible from their beginning onward; a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide." E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 92.

68. Ibid., p. 92.

69. Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *Tradition and Modernization: The Dinka of the Sudan* (Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1971). Second and third imprint, Waveland Press, 1985.

70. Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics in the Southern Sudan*, p. 125.

71. Ibid., p. 99.

72. Ibid., pp. 99–200.

73. M. A. Muhammad Salih, "Tribal Militias, SPLA/SPLM and the

Sudanese State: New Wine in Old Bottles,” in Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed and Gunnar M. Sorbo, eds., *Management of the Crisis in the Sudan, Proceedings of the Bergen February 23–24, 1989* (Bergen: Center for Development Studies, University of Bergen, 1989), pp. 65–82.

74. Ibid., p. 73.

75. Nelson Kasfir, *The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics with a Case Study of Uganda* (University of California Press, 1976), p. 14.

76. Ibid., p. 74.

77. Ibid., p. 69.

78. Ibid., p. 70.

79. Ian Cunnison, *Baggara Arabs: Power and the Lineage in a Sudanese Nomad Tribe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 118.

80. Kasfir, *The Shrinking Political Arena*, p. 70.

81. Ibid., p. 71.

82. Abdelwahab El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in the Sudan*, (London: Grey Seal, 1991), pp. 44–45.

CHAPTER 7

1. P. P. Howell, "Notes on the Ngork Dinka," *Sudan Notes and Records*, vol. 32, part 2 (1951), pp. 239–93; 248.

2. As Peter Woodward implies, the benefit from the marriage was mutual between Babo and the Mahdists, for whom the Humr were traditionally Ansar-supporters of Mahdism. "Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi cemented the relationship by giving his granddaughter's hand in marriage to Babo Nimr." *Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1990), p. 68.

3. After tracing the history of the Ngok from Jok, Paul Howell observes, "The position has been held in this line ever since and according to strict primogeniture, the office descending to the eldest son of the oldest wife

in each case.” Howell, “Notes on the Ngok Dinka,” p. 264. Howell goes on to say, “Such political power as is backed by the Government in the present system of administration was naturally accorded to the Chief of the Spear by the Ngok themselves, and not only to the principal Pajok family but also to the minor leaders who are all Chiefs of the Spear, either of the Pajok clan or the Dhiandiar.” Howell also reports that “Jok ... had four sons and a daughter: Aiwel, Bulabek, Dhion, Biar, and ... Achai ... Biar became leader of Twij, Dhion of the Rek, Aiwel and Bulabek, of the Ngok” (p. 242). This would justify the Ngok claim for Pajok as the original leader of all the Dinka.

4. K. D. D. Henderson, “The Migration of the Missiriya into South-West Kordofan,” Sudan Notes and Records, vol. 22, part 1 (1939), pp. 49–77.

5. Henderson notes that “Kwoldit’s grandson Alor subsequently moved south to Korreita to avoid being separated from the Twij and caught between the Nuer and the Baggara, who then occupied the Tebusayya land of the Re-geba.” “Migration of the Missiriya,” p. 58.

6. The Ngok distinguish two groups of their people. The original settlers who, listed alphabetically include Abyor, Achweng, Anyiel, Diil, Mannyuar, and Mareng, are collectively referred to as Koich or Akok; the latter word is sometimes used to connote “the public” or “the people! The remaining three tribes, Alei, Achak, and Bongo, the Paan-Cien, which literally means “the people behind,” compose the sections that subsequently followed.

In “The Ngork Dinka” Howell spells the Paan-Cien as Pancieng, a technical error since the latter means “occupied land or home,” an area where people reside. Howell correctly points out that the distinction has no significance among the Ngok today (p. 249). On the other hand, following the death of

Deng Majok, some ambitious individuals from the Paan-Cien group of tribes, led by the notorious Matet Ayom of Alei, began to agitate for a separate leadership and a separate court system.

7. Henderson observes of Biong, "When the Ruweng Agubba were dislodged from Lake Abyad by internal feuds or Hawazma raids, Biong, son of Alor, handed over to them the bit of country at Kerreita. and moved further west to the site now called Sultan Arob after his son." "Migration of the Missiriya," p. 58. See also Abdelbasit Saeed, "The State and Socio-Economic Transformation in the Sudan: The Case of Social Conflict in Southwest Kurdofoan," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut (1982), p. 162.

8. Francis Mading Deng, *Dinka Cosmology* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), pp. 323–26.

9. Francis Mading Deng, *The Dinka and Their Songs*, the Oxford Library of African Literature Series, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, G. Lienhardt, and W. H. Whiteley eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973)-, p. 206.

10. See, for instance, the Ngok Dinka accounts of slavery in Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, pp. 262–67; 301–304.

11. The quotations in the material that follows were recorded during the research for the book *The Man Called Deng Majok* (Yale University Press, 1986). Unless otherwise indicated, they were not included in the published work.

12. H. M. Salih and others, *Abyei Report: Main Report of the Socio-Economic Survey* (Development Studies and Research Center, Khartoum University 1978), p. 8. Quoted in Saeed, "The State and Socio-Economic Transformation," p. 163.

13. Ironically according to K. D. D. Henderson, when the non-Mahdist Homr, led by Hamadan Abu Ein, were thrown out of Dar Missiriya, the Ngok accommodated them in the swamps of Baralil and continued to give them protection until the condominium. "Migration of the Missiriya."

p. 69.

14. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, pp. 262–63.

15. What must have been an unfamiliar food is dramatized as donkey meat and sometimes as the afterbirth of a donkey.

16. Bulabek Malith in Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 263.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

18. Howell, “Notes on the Ngork Dinka,” p. 264.

19. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, ‘Arabism, Africanism and Self-Identification in the Sudan,’ in Yung Fadl Hasan, ed., *Sudan in Africa* (Khartoum University Press, 1971), p. 230. Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 48.

20. K. D. D. Henderson, *The Sudan Republic* (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), pp. 26–27.

21. Howell, “Notes on the Ngork Dinka,” pp. 246–47. Chief Pagwot Deng explained that although the Ngok are administratively in the North in their customs, particularly those pertaining to marriage, they are southerners: “We and the South, we intermarry with cattle. The Southerner marries my daughter and I marry his daughter. He elopes with my daughter and I elope with his daughter.”

22. See, for instance, Sir Gawain Bell's comparison between the Ngok Dinka and the Homr Arabs on this issue in Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, pp. 137–38.

23. As Tim Niblock noted, “Ivory was perhaps the most important lure

which brought the traders to Sudan, and it was this lure that led them into increasingly nefarious activities” like slavery. *Class and Power in the Sudan: The Dynamics of Sudanese Politics 1898–1985* (State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 9. Gifts of ivory were therefore regarded as the most valuable commodity, perhaps even more than slaves.

24. Chol Piok's account. As late as 1921, the British administrators in Kordofan were still keeping a close watch on the activities of the Humr in the Dinka area. Robert O. Collins notes, in *Shadows in the Grass* (Yale University Press, 1983), “J. W. Sagar, governor of Kordofan ... was very concerned to support the Ngok Chief, Kwol Arob, against the Homr Arabs whose restlessness ... might lead them to create confusion in the borderlands by looting Dinka cattle.” p. 35.

25. K. D. D. Henderson, “Migration of the Missiriya,” p. 71. In his response to the questionnaire for *The Man Called Deng Majok*, Henderson wrote, “I always understood that the Ngok were in Kordofan because Kwol ... went to El Obeid at the Futuh (Reconquest) to tender his allegiance. It was twenty years before the Bahr el Ghazal authorities reached the river [Bahr el Arab — Ngokland].” Unpublished account from the interviews for *The Man Called Deng Majok*.

26. Deng, unpublished account from interviews for *The Man Called Deng Majok*.

27. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 265.

28. Francis Mading Deng, *Recollections of Babo Nimir* (London: Ithaca Press, 1982), pp. 11–13.

29. In a written response to the questionnaire for *The Man Called Deng Majok*.

30. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 84.

31. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 47.

32. Ibid., p. 34.

33. Howell, "Notes on the Ngork Dinka," p. 240.

34. In a written response to the questionnaire for The Man Called Deng Majok.

35. Deng, Dinka Cosmology, p. 39; and Deng, The Man Called Deng Majok, p. 49.

36. Deng, Dinka Cosmology, pp. 74–75.

37. Deng, Dinka Cosmology, pp. 39–40; Deng, The Man Called Deng Majok, p. 50.

38. K. D. D. Henderson, after explaining that "if the South, while remaining essentially southern, could yet become an integral part of an independent Sudan it could help to bridge the inevitable gulf between Muslim and non-Muslim, Asian and African, white or brown and black, in the African future," goes on to say, "The Ngok Dinka, on the Bahr el Arab, had joined Kordofan Province at the reoccupation and had played precisely such a role as intermediaries between the Homr Baggara and the Dinka of the Bahr el Ghazal." Sudan Republic (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), p. 164n.

39. Babo's reference to Kwol as "Father" is a term of deference that indicates the importance of family to identity. In his response to the questionnaire on Deng Majok, K. D. D. Henderson observed that "Babo treated Kwol Arob as a father."

40. Deng, Recollections of Babo Nimir, pp. 50–51; Deng, The Man Called Deng Majok, pp. 82–83.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. For details of the case, see Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, chapters 1 and 2.

44. Deng, *The Recollections of Babo Nimir*, pp. 51–53; Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, pp. 83–84.

45. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 85.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 223–24.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 224.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 224–25.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 223–24.

51. Deng, *The Recollections of Babo Nimir*, p. 59.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

60. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, pp. 137–38.

61. Chief Pagwot Deng, unpublished portion of an interview for *The Man Called Deng Majok*, Kadingli, September, 1977.

62. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 331.

63. David Cole and Richard Huntington, *African Rural Development: Some Lessons from Abyei*, unpublished manuscript (Harvard Institute for International Development, October, 1985), chapter 5, p. 37. Quoted in Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 23, n5.

64. Howell, "Notes on the Ngork Dinka," pp. 263–64.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

66. See Paul P. Howell, *A Manual of Nuer Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).

67. Mithiang Aguek, quoted in Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 137.

68. Chol Piok, in Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 140.

CHAPTER 8

1. Francis Mading Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok* (Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 230–31.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 231–32.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 232–33.

5. Francis Mading Deng, *Recollections of Babo Nimir* (London: Ithaca Press, 1982), p. 59.

6. Babo Nimir divorced all his wives to marry her, but after producing several sons, well-raised and educated in close association with both families, the marriage was dissolved, according to Babo's account to me, because she was condescending and could not adapt herself to the

because she was condescending and could not adapt herself to the conditions of his tribal context.

7. Abdelbasit Saeed, "The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the

Sudan: The Case of Social Conflict in Southwest Kordofan," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1982, pp. 215–16.

8. Ibid., p. 216.

9. Ibid., p. 218.

10. Ibid., p. 219.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 221.

13. Ibid., pp. 221–22.

14. Ibid., p. 222.

15. File No. M.R.Sh. 66-D-1, Al Fula, 1979; Saeed, "The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan," p. 222.

16. Ibid., p. 224.

17. Ibid.

18. Quoted by Saeed, "The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan," p. 225.

19. Ibid., p. 226.

20. Deng, The Man Called Deng Majok, p. 239.

21. Ibid.

22. Report of the Commissioner of Police-South Kordofan on Tribal Conflicts, Kadugli, 1976. Quoted by Saeed, "The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan," p. 228.

23. Ibid., pp. 229–30.

24. Chol Adija, in the interview for The Man Called Deng Majok.

25. According to Chief Pagwot Deng, “When this problem first occurred, if we were in the South, there would be no single Ngok alive today. The Arabs would have destroyed totally.” Francis M. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), p. 275.

26. Saeed, “The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan,” p. 164.

27. Chol Adija in the interview for The Man Called Deng Majok.

28. Chol Adija in the interview for The Man Called Deng Majok.

29. Reports of the Commissioner of Police-South Kordofan, presented to the Kadugli Conference on Missiriya-Ngok Conflict, September :1977, cited in Saeed, “The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan,” pp. 231–32.

30. Ibid.

31. District reports, File No. MRDM-66-3-A. Tribal Conflicts-General, Al Fula, 1966. Cited by Saeed, “The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan,” p. 230.

32. Ibid., pp. 230–31.

33. Ibid.

34. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 269.

35. Deng, *The Recollections of Babo Nimir*, p. 61.

36. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 7.

37. This was particularly the case around January and February 1983, when many among the Ngok elite, including leading sons of Deng Majok, were arrested on charges of instigating and masterminding the renewal of rebellion in the Ngok area and in the region of northern Bahr al-Ghazal. The chief of national security, who was also vice president of the

Shazali, the chief of national security, who was also vice president of the republic,, threatened to charge them with treasonable offenses. The contrast between Deng Majok's commitment to unity and the position of his sons was highlighted in the press.

On the other hand, when after several months of mediation, reconciliation was effected between the Ngok leaders and the authorities of Kordofan with the sympathetic involvement of the national security chief and the president, the occasion was celebrated in the media as if it were a second Addis Ababa Agreement. This in itself represented the importance of the area as a link and a potential source of conflict between the North and the South.

38. In private correspondence, the following appears in a report by Justin Deng, a Ngok Dinka who was then an official in the central government, but was sent on a fact-finding mission to the men by the Southern Front: "I went to Abyei last June (1965) and I witnessed the state of affairs there. The whole of Ngok has been burnt down by the Baggara Arabs and their soldiers. The only houses one sees when travelling by Muglad road are Abyei itself. There is no sign of life at Gongnom. Even birds have abandoned it. Only flies, of which there are plenty, now inhabit the area. Grain was all burnt, but the government had sent 4,000 sacks of grain. This grain is of course to be sold. Most people have gone to Tuic, mostly the Chief's family and a few others from Abyor sub-tribe were the only sign of Ngok existence."

39. Citing official district reports, Saeed wrote of the incident: "Abdallah ... was murdered, together with three of his uncles and his two immediate lawful successors ... in an ambush by the South Sudanese Anya-Nya forces in late 1970." "The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan," p. 177. Needless to say, there was absolutely no reason for the Anya-Nya forces to commit the murder. In any case, blaming atrocities committed by government forces against the rebels was a common practice. Indeed, the author was informed by a senior military officer that the investigation into Chief Abdalla's death established the case against the security forces, but that there was disagreement within the military on action to be taken. Some, including himself, felt that it was good for the image of the army that action be taken against those responsible. But the dominant view was that such action would demoralize the security forces. In the end, even the report was not published.

40. Article 2 (iii) of the Southern Sudan Provinces Regional Self-Government Act, 1972, states: "Southern Provinces of the Sudan" means the provinces of Bahr al-Ghazal, Equatoria and Upper Nile in accordance with their boundaries as they stood January 1, 1956 and any other areas that were culturally and geographically a part of the Southern complex as will be decided by a referendum.

41. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, pp. 284–85.

42. Saeed, "The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan," pp. 163–64.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Deng, *Dinka Cosmology*, p. 336. For a reaction from the South, see pp. 92–93 and pp. 219–20.

45. I developed this proposal soon after being appointed ambassador to Scandinavia, but continued to be actively involved in the affairs of the area.

46. "A Proposed Plan for the Development of Abyei as a Model for National Integration."

47. *Ibid.*

48. Saeed, "The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan," p. 212.

49. *Ibid.* Appendix 19, p. 436.

50. David Cole and Richard Huntington, "African Rural Development: Some

Lessons from Abyei,” unpublished manuscript, Harvard Institute for International Development, 1985, p. 18. Quoted in Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 261.

51. Saeed, “The State and Socioeconomic Transformation in the Sudan,” p. 270.

52. Final Report of the Assistant to the Commissioner for the Western District on Security Problems; July, 1981; no file number was available. *Ibid.*, pp. 170–71n.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 275.

54. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 264.

55. Abyei Integrated Rural Development project is cited by Mansour Khalid as one of the major projects funded by AID in the Sudan in the 1970s. *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul, 1990), p. 288.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 272–73. What is noteworthy about these reports, whether in original or in translated form, is that the authors reflect no knowledge of the published literature on the area, including the spelling of personal and area names, of which there is a great deal. Ngokland was being totally reinvented.

58. *Ibid.*

59. Dunstan Wai quotes Ali Abdel Rahman, then minister of the interior, as saying, “Sudan is an integral part of the Arab world-anybody dissenting from this view must quit the country.” *The African-Arab Conflict in the Sudan* (New York and London: Africana Publishing Company, 1981), p. 229. Original source Parliamentary Proceedings, second sitting of the First Session of Parliament (1958), p. 3.

60. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, p. 263.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Ibid.*, p. 283. Michael, whose Dinka name was Miokol, one of the middle sons of Deng Majok, was also a member of the Central Committee of the Sudan Socialist Union, in addition to his position at the local level.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 285.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Matet Ayom, perhaps the most pro-North spokesman, had asked the author in an earlier meeting with the chiefs and leaders why he had proposed the alternative policy for Abyei instead of working for joining the Ngok to the South. Did that objective prove too formidable to accomplish? Even then, his motives were probably cynical.

69. Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in the Sudan* (State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 288.

70. "Mabruk Nimeiri Ra'is al-Jumhuriyya," *Al-Ayam* (April 3, 1983), p. 7.

71. The initiative was taken by the author while in the Sudan from his post as ambassador in Canada to attend the National Congress of the Sudan Socialist Union. Both initiatives were strongly supported by the American ambassador, William Kontos, with whom the author was in close contact.

72. Deng, *The Man Called Deng Majok*, pp. 266–67.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

74. One of the military leaders of the May revolution intimated to Dr.

Zachariah Bol and the author in private conversation that the Abyei settlement gave President Nimeiri the courage to move forward with his redivision strategy and that without the resolution of the Abyei problem, he would not have dared to decree the division. It all sounded too far-fetched since the connection was not apparent. And yet, the source was impeccably credible. It is perhaps conceivable that Nimeiri saw Abyei as the imminent source of potential rebellion and that with that issue seemingly resolved, the simmering situation there would subside and no rebellious response to his policy in the South was likely to erupt anywhere else, especially as his security chief had established that the sole source of disturbances in the South was Abyei, in particular the sons of Deng Majok.

75. For a detailed account of the situation, see John Ryle, "The Road to Ab-yei," *GRANTA*, no. 26 (Spring 1989), pp. 41–104. Ryle observed, "It was hard to avoid hearing stories of atrocities committed by the Arab militias. This woman had been raped; this man tortured and castrated; that man's wife had been killed in front of him; a boy of ten had been kidnapped and kept for two years as a servant, beaten when he tried to escape, and finally killed. There were clearly many Dinkas still in captivity." p. 63.

76. Francis M. Deng, "In Sudan, Masses Die as Rebels, Government Use Food as a Weapon," *Los Angeles Times*, February 8, 1989.

77. This is based on information received by the author from local tribal leaders and officials of the central government and representatives of the SPLM-SPLA, including John Garang himself.

CHAPTER 9

1. Mansour Khalid, "External Factors in the Sudanese Conflict," in Francis M. Deng and Prosser Gifford, eds., *The Search for Peace and Unity in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: Wilson Center Press, 1987), p. 109.

2. Ibid., pp. 109–10.

3. Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1990), p. 151.

4. Cecil Eprile, *War and Peace in the Sudan, 1955–1972* (London: David and Charles, World Realities, 1974), p. 162. For his own account of his role, see Muhammad Ahmed Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial: Reflections on Arab and African Politics* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1974).

5. Ibid., pp. 108–09.

6. Eprile, *War and Peace in the Sudan, 1955–1972*, p. 162.

7. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan: A Study in Constitutional and Political Development, 1899–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon, p. 113.)

8. Ibid., pp. 113–14.

9. Quoted in 'Abd Al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism*, p. 114.

10. Ibid., p. 114.

11. Ibid., p. 115.

12. Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story: A Study in Loyalties* (London: John Murray, 1946), p. 158.

13. Eprile, *War and Peace in the Sudan*, p. 162.

14. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 280.

15. Ibid., pp. 280–81.
16. Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial*, p. 212.
17. Ibid., p. 213.
18. Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial*, p. 63.
19. Ibid., p. 74.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 97.
22. Ibid., p. 98.
23. Ibid., pp. 98–99.
24. Interview with Bona Malwal on April 30, 1993, in Washington, D.C.
25. Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial*, p. 136.
26. Peter Woodward, *Sudan, 1898–1989, The Unstable State* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers; London, Lester Crook Academic Publishers, 1990), pp. 132–33.
27. Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial*, pp. 136–37.
28. Malcolm H. Kerr, *The Arab Cold War: Gamal Abd al Nasir and His Rivals, 1958–1970* (Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 139.
29. Ibid., p. 140.
30. Woodward, *Sudan, 1898–1989, The Unstable State*, p. 133.
31. Mahjoub, *Democracy on Trial*, p. 247.
32. For Nimeiri's shifting domestic and foreign policies, see Dunstan M.

Wai, "The Sudan: Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations under Nimeiri," *African Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 312 (July 1979), pp. 297–317. See also Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, pp. 341–42, where the author cites John Garang's enumeration of the instances in which Nimeiri did not live up to agreements he made with other parties, both national and foreign.

33. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Peace and Unity in the Sudan: An African Achievement* (University of Khartoum Press, 1973).

34. See William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Brookings, University of California Press, 1993), pp. 139–40; and Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 297.

35. Mansour Khalid, *Nimeiri and the Revolution of Dis-May* (London: KPI, Ltd., 1985), pp. 304–08. See also Robert O. Collins's testimony before the Sub-committee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, October 29, 1981.

36. *Congressional Record*, 94 Cong. 1 Sess. vol. 122, no. 98. July 29, 1976.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*

39. President Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiri, "Sudan Development: A Model for Peace and International Cooperation," Statement delivered before the U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Office of International Trade, Foreign Trade Association of Southern California, and International Trade League of Orange County, September 25, 1978, Los Angeles, California.

40. Francis Mading Deng, "The Camp David Accord and the Search for Peace in the Middle East," unpublished report.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Even such a zealous Islamist leader as Hassan al-Turabi, leader of the National Islamic Front, commended the report in a private conversation with the author, although he added that he thought it was too pragmatic.

47. It was then that the Sudan and Egypt signed a treaty of mutual defense, which would in due course become a point of contention between successive governments in Khartoum and the SPLM-SPLA in their negotiation process.

48. Bona Malwal, *People and Power in Sudan: The Struggle for National Stability* (London: Ithaca Press, 1982), p. 155.

49. Abel Alier, *Southern Sudan: Too Many Agreements Dishonoured* (Exeter: Ithaca Press, 1990), pp. 236–37.

50. *Ibid.*

51. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 329.

52. Woodward reports the withdrawal of the ambassador more categorically by stating: “Under considerable pressure from other Arab states to break diplomatically with Egypt, Nimeiri did go as far as withdrawing Sudan's ambassador and expressing reservations over parts of the treaty” Sudan, 1898–1989, *The Unstable State*, pp. 167–68.

53. Sudan: Problems and Prospects, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 98 Cong. 2 sess. March 28, 1984 (1985), p. 1.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

55. Interview with Bona Malwal.

56. *Ibid.*

57. According to Tim Niblock, “Rising oil prices gave a new impetus to

development programmes in the Gulf states, which in turn increased the demand there for externally recruited professionals, skilled workers and manual labourers. The Sudanese labour market was well placed to respond to this demand. While jobs in the Gulf brought private gain to the many individuals who obtained such employment — and also brought some foreign exchange to Sudan through remittances, albeit in smaller amounts than first anticipated — the overall impact was to limit the Sudanese government's ability to control the economy.” *Class and Power in the Sudan*, pp. 285–86.

58. Interview with Bona Malwal, London.

59. From an interview in Addis Ababa in September 1989 with Khalid and others.

60. Woodward, *Sudan, 1898–1989, The Unstable State*, p. 212.

61. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 10

1. Fredrik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), pp. 10–11.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1976) p. 20.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

7. Nelson Kasfir, “Peacemaking and Social Cleavages in Sudan,” in

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V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1990), pp. 365–66.

8. Ibid., p. 366.

9. Ibid., p. 366. As Peter Woodward has argued, “Although there may be considerable plasticity in identity, it is not something that is entirely malleable.” Sudan, 1898–1989: The Unstable State (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1990), p. 7.

10. Kasfir, "Peacemaking and Social Cleavages in Sudan."

11. For a comparison between black African countries where Islam is divorced from Arabism as an ethnic and cultural concept and North African Muslim countries where Islam is tied to Arabism, see Omari H. Kokole, "The Islamic Factor in African-Arab Relations," *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3 (July 1984), pp. 687–702.

12. Naomi Chazan and others, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1988).

13. Ibid., p. 102.

14. Ibid., p. 120; p. 110. The implication is to denigrate ethnicity as merely a creation of the politicians. But, as Peter Woodward has argued, “even if ‘tribalism’ is, as some claim, an ideological mantle of false consciousness deployed by bourgeois rulers, this in turn shows that it has to be recognised. But it is much more than that: It is one root of political action in Africa in relation to both the imperial and post-imperial state, and it cannot be summarily dismissed.” *Sudan 1898–1989, The Unstable State*, p. 5.

15. Chazan and others, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, p. 120.

16. Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, p. 5.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

18. In a case witnessed by the author in 1961, a group of Sudanese students from Khartoum University almost all of whom were northerners, were strolling in a Cairo park when a group of Egyptian high school students followed them chanting, "Lumumba, Lumumba," obviously thinking they were from a black African country. One of the Sudanese students turned to them and said in Arabic, "Brothers, we are Arabs like you." On hearing the Arabic, the Egyptian students opened their hands wide chanting, "Welcome, brothers from the Sudan!" In another episode in London, a group of Sudanese students stood talking in the London underground train when a man who looked European turned in surprise to his colleague and said in Arabic, "They speak Arabic."

19. Ali A. Mazrui, "The Multiple Marginality of the Sudan," in Yusuf Fadl Hasan, ed., *Sudan in Africa* (Khartoum University Press, 1971). Mazrui does not see the Sudan's marginality in terms of a crisis but rather as a more positive linkage between the various elements of identity involved. The crisis dimension in the sentence summarizing his paper is therefore this author's, not Mazrui's.

20. Donald L. Horowitz, "Research on Ethnicity," report of a meeting at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, August 1991, p. 11. The paradoxical tendency among scholars to recognize the subjective factor in self-identification as pivotal while ignoring subjective claims on the basis of blood or race was the subject of discussions in a meeting convened by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

21. Walker Connor, "Nationalism and Patriotism: The Clash of Allegiances," in Horowitz, "Research on Ethnicity," p. 31.

22. Ibid., p. 26.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., pp. 26–27.

25. Ibid., pp. 29–30.

26. The Republic of the Sudan, Ministry for Social Welfare, First Population Census of the Sudan: Twenty-One Facts about the Sudanese, 1958. See also John Obert Voll and Sarah Potts Voll, *The Sudan: Unity and Diversity in a Multicultural State* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), p. 7. The Volls state, “Fewer than 1 percent of the Sudanese involved in the census did not record a tribal identification.”

27. Ali A. Mazrui, “The Black Arabs in Comparative Perspective: The Political Sociology of Race Mixture,” in Dunstan Wai, ed., *The Southern Sudan: The Problem of National Integration* (London: Frank Cass, 1973), p. 68.

28. Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*, p. 408.

29. Ironically the Ja'aliyin have a popular myth, the origin of which is not clear, which claims that they are cousins of the Dinka, probably an extension of their chauvinism since the Dinka are the most numerous in the whole country and the most important group in the South.

30. John O. Voll, “Northern Muslim Perspectives,” in John V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1991), p. 389.

31. John Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in the Sudan* (Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 4.

32. Kasfir, “Peacemaking and Social Cleavages in the Sudan,” p. 365.

33. Lucian W. Pye, “Identity and the Political Culture,” in *Crises and*

Sequence in Political Development (Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 110.

34. M. W. Daly, "Islam, Secularism and Ethnic Identity in the Sudan," in Gustavo Benevides and M. W. Daly, eds., *Religion and Political Power* (State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 83.

35. Ibid., p. 84.

36. Lloyd A. Binagi, "The Genesis of the Modern Sudan: An Interpretive Study of the Rise of Afro-Arab Hegemony in the Nile Valley A. D. 1260–1826," Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1981.

37. Raphael Patai, *The Arab Mind* (Scribner's, 1973), p. 12.

38. Muhammad Tawfik Husayn and Nabih Amin Faris, *The Crescent in Crisis: An Interpretive Study of the Modern Arab World* (University of Kansas Press, 1955), pp. 177–78.

39. Binagi, "The Genesis of the Modern Sudan," p. 378.

40. Voll and Voll, *The Sudan: Unity and Diversity in a Multicultural State*.

41. See text in appendix 15 in Muhammad Omar Bashir, *The Southern Sudan: Background to Conflict* (Khartoum University Press), p. 168.

42. Muddathir 'Abd Al-Rahim, "Arabism, Africanism, Self-Identification in the Sudan," in Yusuf Fadl Hasan, ed., *Sudan in Africa* (Khartoum University Press, 1971), pp. 237–38. Also in Wai, ed., *The Southern Sudan*, p. 43.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. As Yusuf Fadl Hasan explained in a conversation with the author, it does not occur to the ordinary Arab in the tribes that he can be anything but Arab. He is not even aware that Arabs are supposed to be lighter in skin than he is. Nor is he aware of the dark skin's being a characteristic of Negro Africans.

of Negro Americanness.

46. Interview with Muhammad El Fateh, member of the Umma party, conducted in Washington by Khalid Mustafa Medani.

47. "The Southern Sudan Problem: Internal-External, Direct-Indirect Repercussions" speech presented in Sanaa, September 26, 1988, published by the Council of Ministers, Republic of the Sudan, Khartoum, 1988, p. 17.

48. Mansour Khalid, *The Socio-Cultural Determinants of Arab Diplomacy: Selections from Sudanese Literature*, no. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Embassy of the Democratic Republic of the Sudan, Office of the Cultural Counsellor, 1976), p. 3.

49. Jamal Muhammad Ahmed has observed, "Islam after all is inseparable from the Arabs who conceived of it." "Islam and Socio-Religious Thought of Africa," in Charles Malik, ed., *God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (American University of Beirut Centennial Publications, 1972), p. 46. Ideally, however, Islam was intended to be a message to all races and cultures. For the Prophet's perspective on this, see pp. 27–29.

50. Lilian Passmore Sanderson and Neville Sanderson, *Education, Religion and Politics in Southern Sudan 1899–1961* (Khartoum University Press, 1981), p. 8.

51. Ali Mazrui, "The Black Arabs in Comparative Perspective," p. 69. Michael Wolfers argues, "So much of the debate on race relations is conducted on the interaction of black and white groups and peoples that we do not have a ready terminology for what is occurring in a country like Sudan." "Race and Class in Sudan," in *Race and Class*, vol. 23, no. 1 (Summer 1980, pp. 65–79.

52. Interview with Abd Al-Rahman al-Bashir in The Hague, the Netherlands, February 1991.

53. Ibid.

54. A member of a leading family whose father was very dark and mother very light told the story of another well-known man who was married to

an Egyptian. Asked why he married a Halabiya, he replied, "I have suffered all my life from this blackness of my skin; should I not improve the prospects for my children?" Another humorous story is told by another prominent Northern Sudanese about a dark-skinned Sudanese who, when told by a light-skinned Sudanese how insulted he felt for being called a "nigger," responded, "I cannot blame the whites when I myself hate this black color on me." These are of course jocular stories told in intimate Northern circles, but they do unquestionably indicate the degree to which the crisis of racial identity is both personal and collective or national.

55. Ahmed S. al-Shahi, "Proverbs and Social Values in a Northern Sudanese Village," in Ian Cunnison and Wendy James, *Essays in Sudan Ethnography* (London: Hurst, 1972), p. 921.

56. Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1990), p. 135.

57. Mansour Khalid told the author of a conversation he had with a Northern Sudanese graduate of Khartoum University with advanced degrees, indeed a university lecturer, who questioned his membership in the Southern-dominated SPLM: "Even we, the descendants of the Arabs you hold a low opinion about our lack of culture and sophistication. What could possibly have brought you together with the Janubyeen?"

58. Evidence of a leading Southern politician given to the author.

59. Francis Mading Deng, *The Dinka and Their Songs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 148.

60. From an unpublished collection by the author.

61. Francis Mading Deng, *Dinka Cosmology* (London: Ithaca Press, 1980), pp. 84–85.

62. Dunstan M. Wai, "Revolution, Rhetoric and Reality in the Sudan," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1 (March, 1979), p. 74.

63. UNESCO, Information Document, "Towards Developing Tools for Developing the Cultural Dimension into Development Plans and Projects" (Paris, 1992). Presented to the International Conference on Culture and Development in Africa, April 2–3, 1992, The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

64. Guy Olivier Faure and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, eds., *Culture and Negotiation: The Resolution of Water Disputes* (London: Sage, 1993).

65. Mazrui, "The Multiple Marginality of the Sudan," p. 243.

66. Mazrui, "The Black Arabs in Comparative Perspective: The Political Sociology of Race Mixture," in Wai, ed., *The Southern Sudan*, pp. 47, 81.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

69. Muddathir 'Abd al-Rahim, *Imperialism and Nationalism in the Sudan. A Study in Constitutional and Political Development, 1899–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), p. 5, n. 1.

70. For instance, Daly, "Islam, Secularism and Ethnic Identity in the Sudan" pp. 83–84.

71. Mazrui, "The Black Arabs in Comparative Perspective," p. 72.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

74. Mazrui, "The Multiple Marginality of the Sudan," p. 245.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

76. Ibid., p. 249.

77. Ibid.

78. 'Abd al-Rahim, "Arabism, Africanism and Self-Identification in the Sudan," pp. 43–44; also in Wai, *The Southern Sudan*.

79. John O. Voll, "Northern Muslim Perspectives," in Joseph V. Montville, ed., *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books 1991), pp. 389–409; and Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (University of California Press, 1985).

80. Ibid., pp. 21–23.

81. Voll, "Northern Muslim Perspectives," p. 393.

82. Ibid., p. 398. Dunstan M. Wai quotes the prime minister as saying: "The dominant feature of our nation is an Islamic one and its overpowering expression is Arab." "Revolution, Rhetoric, and Reality in the Sudan," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 17 (March 1979), p. 73.

83. Voll, "Northern Muslim Perspectives," p. 399.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid., p. 403.

86. For a first-hand account of the views of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha, see his *The Second Message of Islam*, translated by Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, a leading disciple of Taha (Syracuse University Press, 1987).

87. Voll, "Northern Muslim Perspectives," p. 404.

88. Cited in Bona Malwal, *People and Power in Sudan: The Struggle for National Stability* (London: Ithaca, 1981), p. 41.

89. Khalid, *The Government They Deserve*, p. 218.

90. Quoted in Francis Mading Deng, *Dynamics of Identification: A Basis for National Integration in the Sudan* (Khartoum University Press, 1973), p. 74. Sadiq al-Mahdi, in a discussion with the author about how polarized the country had become along racial and religious lines, said, "I have no problem whatso

ever with my own identity. I know I am an Arab and a Muslim. But I also know that there are others in this country who are not and whom we must accommodate. The other Northern parties would want to impose their Arab and Islamic identity on the whole country. Which of us offers a better alternative for the country?" Sadiq did not at all present himself as being also an African. The issue for him was which of the varying degrees of Northern commitment to Arabism and Islam was more accommodating and therefore acceptable to the South.

91. Edward Atiyah, *An Arab Tells His Story: A Study in Loyalties* (London: John Murray 1946), pp. 141–42.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

93. Abd al-Rahim, "Arabism, Africanism. and Self-Identification in the Sudan," p. 38.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

95. Bashir, *The Southern Sudan*, p. 134.

96. *Ibid.*

97. Sandra Hale, "The Changing Ethnic Identity of Nubians in an Urban Milieu, Khartoum, Sudan," Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1979.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

101. Poem addressed to a fictitious Southerner named "Malwal," quoted in Deng, *Dynamics of Identification*, p. 69.

102. Hale, "The Changing Ethnic Identity of Nubians," p. 252.

103. *Ibid.*

104. Ibid., p. 245.

105. Ibid., p. 268.

106. Ibid., p. 254.

107. Gabriel R. Warburg, "National Identity in the Sudan: Fact, Fiction and Prejudice in Ethnic and Religious Relations," *Asian and African Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2 (July 1990), p. 155.

108. Talal Asad, *The Kababish Arabs: Power, Authority and Consent in a Nomadic Tribe* (London: Hurst, 1970), p. 184

109. Ian Cunnison, "Blood Money Vengeance and Joint Responsibility: The Baggara Case," in Ian Cunnison and Wendy James, *Essays in Sudan Ethnography* (London: Hurst, 1972).

110. Ibid.

111. Ahmed S. al-Shahi, "Proverbs and Social Values in a Northern Sudanese Village," in Cunnison and James, *Essays in Sudan Ethnography*, p. 91.

112. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in Sudan* (London: Grey Seal, 1991), p. 158. Needless to say, Islam prospers among many peoples around the world who, while perhaps knowing the Koran by heart, do not speak Arabic.

113. Jamal Muhammad Ahmed, "Islam in the Context of Contemporary Socio-Religious Thought of Africa," in Charles Malik, ed., *God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (American University of Beirut, 1972), p. 28.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid, p. 29.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. In an interview with the Arabic newspaper Al-Hayah of November 16,

1991, for instance, Hassan al-Turabi is reported to have identified himself as “secretary general of the Arab and Islamic Popular Conference.” He then explained the conference as “a gathering for Islamic tendencies throughout the world. It comprises nationalists and patriotic tendencies, especially Arab ones.” FBIS-NES 91–227, November 25, 1991. Turabi's fall-back position would, of course, be to insist on the cultural definition of Arabism.

119. Informal translation by Khalid Mustafa Medani.

120. Interview by Khalid Mustafa Medani, March 24, 1991.

121. Interview by the author in Addis Ababa, September 1989.

122. Abdullahi A. Ibrahim, “The Northern Sudanese: An Anthropology of Hybridity,” research fellowship proposal, Carter G. Woodson Institute for Afro-American and African Studies, University of Virginia, 1991, pp. 4–5.

123. Ahmed A. Nasr, “A Search for Identity: Three Trends in Sudanese Folkloristics,” in Ahmed A. Nasr, ed., *Folklore and Development in the Sudan*, Sudanese Library Series, no. 13, Institute of African and Asian Studies, University of Khartoum, Khartoum, 1981, p. 14.

124. *Ibid.*, p. 15. See also Abdalla Abd al-Rahman al-Dirar, *Kitab al-Arabiyya fi al-Sudan*, 2d ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Katib al-Libnani, 1967).

125. Nasr, *Folklore and Development in the Sudan*, pp. 15–16.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 17. See also Abd al-Majid Abdin, *Dirasat Sudaniyya: Majmu'at Magalat fi al-Adab wa al-Tarikh* (Khartoum University Press, 1972).

127. Abdin, *Dirasat Sudaniyya*, p. 38; quoted in Nasr, *Folklore and Development in the Sudan*, p. 18.

128. Sayyid H. Hurreiz's ideas were first introduced in his article, “Afro-Arab relations in the Sudanese Folktales,” in Richard M. Dorson, *African*

Folklore (Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 157–64. Hurreiz subsequently elaborated his thesis in his book *Ja'aliyyin Folktales: An Interplay of African, Arabian and Islamic Elements* (Indiana University Press, 1977). He uses the tales to explain Sudanese culture and its Arab-African sources of influence, including the tensions and conflicts entailed in the process. Northern Sudanese poets in classical Arabic have also dealt with the same issues and reflect the three trends of Arabism, Afro-Arabism, and Africanism. Nasr, p. 32, cites al-Banna as representing Arabism; Feituri, Africanism; and Muhammad Abd al-Hai, Afro-Arabism.

129. Ahmed al-Mu'tasim al-Sheikh, *Anasir Afriqiyya fi al-Ahaji al-Sudaniyya*, diploma dissertation (University of Khartoum, Institute of African and Asian Studies, 1975).

130. Nasr, *Folklore and Development in the Sudan*, P. 27. For Naum Shuqayr's original work, see *Jughrafiyat wa Tarikh al-Sudan* (Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 1967).

131. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

CHAPTER 11

1. While most of the interviews were conducted by the author himself, some were carried out by his research assistant, Khalid Mustafa Medani.

2. Crawford Young, *The Politics of Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), p. 408.

3. Francis Mading Deng, *Cry of the Owl* (New York: Lilian Barber Press, Inc., 1989). Review article, *Africa Events*, January 1993.

4. Quoted in Mansour Khalid, "External Factors in the Sudanese Conflict,"

in Francis Deng and Prosser Gifford, eds., *The Search for Peace and Unity in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: The Wilson Center Press, 1987), p. 220. See also Mansour Khalid, ed., *John Garang Speaks* (London: Kegan Paul, 1987), pp. 125–29.

5. Deng and Gifford, *The Search for Peace and Unity*, p. 220.

6. As Ali Mazrui noted, “Arabic remains definitely the senior partner in this [Anglo-Arabic] linguistic alliance ... In fact Arabic has been gaining ascendancy since the departure of the British, and has recaptured most of the educational system below university level. From the Sudan, as from India, come reports of a declining mastery of the English language; and debates range as to whether the decline is something worth worrying about.” Ali A. Mazrui, “The Multiple Marginality of the Sudan,” in Yusuf Fadl Hasan, ed., *Sudan in Africa* (Khartoum University Press, 1971), p. 252.

7. Khalid, ed., *John Garang Speaks*, p. xii.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, p. 134.

10. See Mansour Khalid, *The Government They Deserve: The Role of the Elite in Sudan's Political Evolution* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1990), p. 110, n5; Tim Niblock, *Class and Power in Sudan: The Dynamic of Sudanese Politics, 1898–1985* (State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 168; and Peter Woodward, *Sudan 1895–1989, the Unstable State* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990), p. 56.

11. Khalid, in reference to *John Garang Speaks*, observes, “Having shed their facile tears over loss of life the purveyors of calumnies jump two questions on you: ‘What does John Garang want anyway?’ and come to that, ‘Who does he think he is? evidence of the disdain with which Southerners are looked upon.’ Yet another question posed is “Does

Garang 'really' want to rule Sudan?" on which Khalid comments, "The self-perceived virtues of some Northerners are limitless. Historically, we in the North have failed to reconcile ourselves with the fact that a Southerner, and worse still a Christian, could even dream of ruling the Sudan." pp. iv-v.

12. Cited in Sharif Harir, "Racism in Islamic Disguise? Retreating Nationalism and Upsurging Ethnicity in Dar Fur, Sudan," unpublished paper, Centre for Development Studies, University of Bergen, p. 9, cited in G. R. Warburg, *Historical Discord in the Nile Valley* (London: C. Hurst, 1992), p. 188.

13. Ibid., p. 9.

14. Ibid., p. 10.

15. Ibid., pp. 12–13.

16. Ibid., p. 14.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 22.

20. See for instance, Abdelwahab el-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution: Islam and Power in the Sudan* (London: Grey Seal, 1991).

21. Jamal M. Ahmed, "Islam and Contemporary Socio-Religious Thought in Africa," in Charles Malik, ed., *God and Man in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (American University of Beirut, 1972), p. 27.

22. Quoted in Ahmed, "Islam and Socio-Religious Thought in Africa," p. 28.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Abel Alier in a written response to the author's questionnaire, dated February 24, 2991, in The Hague.

26. El-Affendi, *Turabi's Revolution*, p. 149.

27. See, for instance, Peter Nyot Kok's review of the framework in Bona Malwal's *Sudan Democratic Gazette*, no. 10, March 1991, p. 5.

28. Kamal Osman Salih, "The Sudan, 1985: The Fading Democracy," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 28, no. 2 (June 1990), p. 224.

29. Abdelwahab el-Affendi, "Discovering the South: Sudanese Dilemmas for Islam in Africa," in *African Affairs (Journal of the Royal African Society)*, vol. 89, no. 358 (July 1990), p. 321.

CHAPTER 12

1. Sharif Harir, "Racism in Islamic Disguise? Retreating Nationalism and Upsurging Ethnicity in Dar Fur, Sudan," unpublished paper, Centre for Development Studies, University of Bergen, p. 11.

2. The options presented here, together with a summary of the main themes of the study were included in "Sudanese Conflict in Perspective: An Action Memorandum," prepared by the author for the Carter Center Consultation of the International Negotiation Network in Atlanta, Georgia, January 15-17, 1992.

3. The proposed program of action outlined here was also presented to the Carter Center Consultation on the Sudan in January 1992.

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